

HISTORY  
OF  
CO-OPERATION



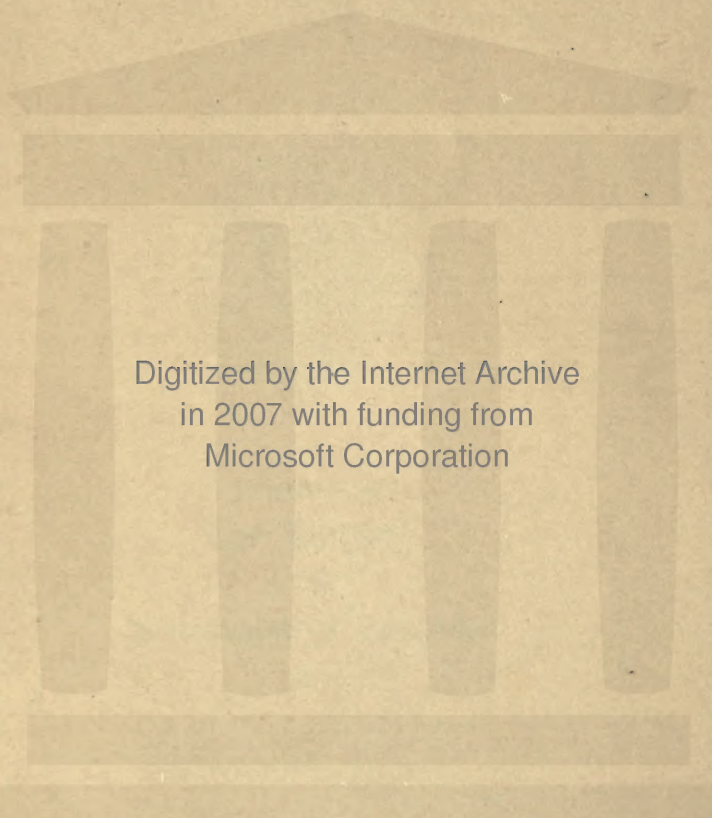
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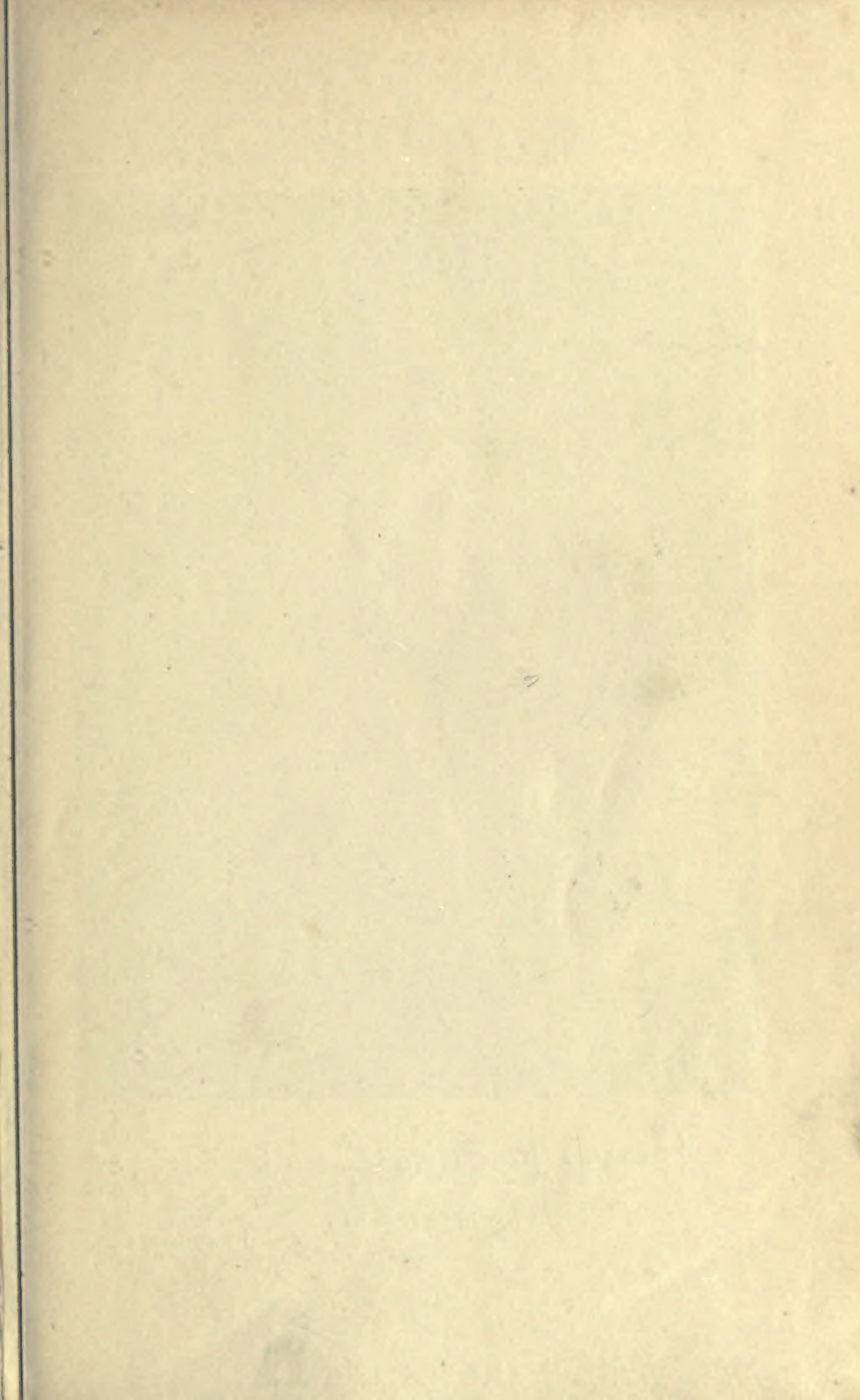
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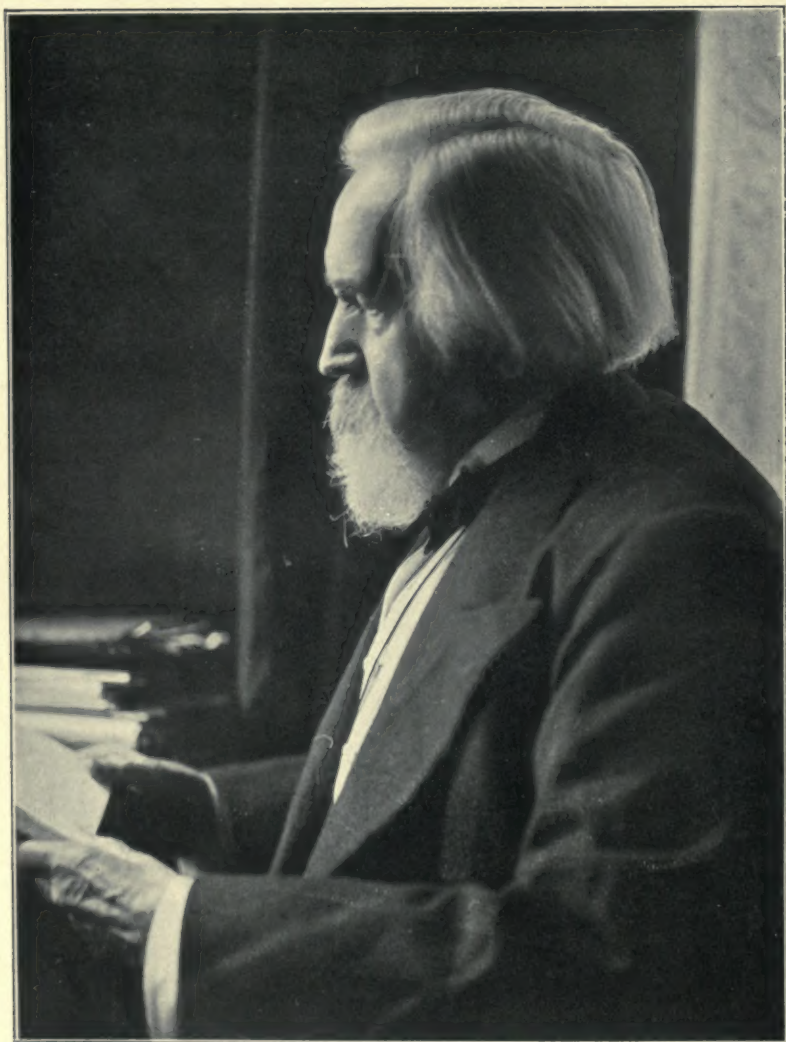
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George Jacob Holyoake

*From Photo: The Press Studio.*

[Frontispiece to Vol. I.]

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# THE HISTORY OF CO - OPERATION

BY

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE

*Author of*

"SIXTY YEARS OF AN AGITATOR'S LIFE," "BYGONES  
WORTH REMEMBERING," ETC.

REVISED AND COMPLETED

Our greatness will appear  
Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,  
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse  
We can create.—MILTON

VOLUME I

221938  
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LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN  
1, ADELPHI TERRACE. MCMVI





VOL. I.—*Pioneer Period, 1812 to 1844. Published by Trübner in 1875.*

VOL. II.—*Constructive Period, 1845 to 1878. Published by Trübner in 1879.*

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To

WENDELL PHILLIPS

WHOSE INTREPID ELOQUENCE

HAS EVER VINDICATED

THE CLAIMS OF THE SLAVE, BLACK OR WHITE,

IN BONDAGE TO PLANTER OR CAPITALIST,

THIS STORY OF PIONEER VICISSITUDES

IS DEDICATED



## PREFACE, 1906

---

EMERSON begins a poem with the words, "God says, I am tired of kings." Lest the reader should say he is tired of prefaces, I make this one very short.

Other histories on this subject will be written, but whatever their merits may be, they cannot be written by any one caring more for Co-operation than myself, or who has been concerned in its career from the days of the Rochdale Pioneers, or been personally conversant with the incidents and persons who made the movement. I have known the motives of those who have promoted it, of those who have retarded it, and those who have withstood it, and for seventy years have vindicated it against its adversaries. The story of this movement is that of an eyewitness.

The Third Part of this work brings the History down to this date, with brevity, but with sufficient explicitness to enable the reader to understand the growth and trend of this new Order of Labour.

Industrial Co-operation—voluntary concert, with equitable participation and control among all concerned in any enterprise—is a definition that would now be accepted by political economists and journalists.

G. J. H.

EASTERN LODGE,  
BRIGHTON,  
*January, 1906.*



[It is but consistent with the principle of Participation represented in this History that the Author should acknowledge his indebtedness to his daughter, Mrs. Holyoake Marsh and his amanuensis, Miss Amy Baum, for assiduous reading of the proofs, when sustained attention by him was impossible—and for suggestions which familiarity with the subject enabled Mrs. Marsh to make.—G. J. H.]

## PREFACE TO VOL. I. OF 1875

---

My desire has been to write an account of the origin and growth of Co-operation, of the literature which fostered it, of the persons who aided it, the principles which directed it, and the influence of Co-operation on the future welfare of labour. To this end I have sought facts of all informed persons, in England and America, saying to them that any books, pamphlets, rules, placards, papers, letters relating to the early Co-operative movements, or articles in reviews or periodicals about it, of sermons preached against it, I should be glad to hear of, to borrow, or to buy. Recollections of early meetings for promoting it, names of persons who took part in founding the early stores, or as promoters, managers, committee-men, writers or lecturers in any place, and what became of the persons themselves, would be welcome to me. I desired that none would assume that I might know what they knew. I wanted to be sure that I knew it. It was said of Hume that his "History of England" would have been more accurate but for the obligation he was under of sometimes imagining his facts, from the difficulty of transporting himself to the book-shelf, where means of their identity lay. For myself, being as lithe as an Indian and resilient as an American, I might be depended upon to get at any fact which came within reasonable distance of me.

My wish has been to give particulars of the persons who made the movement—it being not enough to treat Co-operation as a bale of cotton, and discourse of its fineness and value in the market. It concerns the reader to know who were the

artificers of the ultimate fabric ; what were its pattern and colour, its texture and durability.

Let no one fear to pester me with suggestions. Many counsellors bring no perplexity, provided an author takes his own wilful way in the end ; and he takes it with many advantages, who has his eyes well open, knowing all that can be said on the subject in hand. The real peril of the historian is that he may paralyse his readers by tameness, or kill curiosity by monotony. There are persons who have a well-founded terror of making suggestions. We have ministers of State who teach that persons with ideas are to be distrusted, and it is not counted safe for any one with "notions" in his mind to go about certain Government departments now.

In some cases, however, information transmitted has not been very apparent, though worth all the trouble of deciphering. All penmen are not gifted. A bird pattering out of an inkpot over a page would be a rival writer to some correspondents, who seem the natural and ready-made secretaries of Secret Societies, since no expert of the most suspicious Government known would be able to make much out of their caligraphy.

It has, however, occurred to many correspondents, as it did to Lord Palmerston, that the purpose of writing is to be read, and that what is to be readable must be intelligible, and they have practised the unappreciated art of plainness to my great profit. My letter of inquiry inserted in the *New York Tribune* brought many communications from that wide-awake land. No case of any undecipherable caligraphy arose in American letters ; they make things pretty plain out there.

Where suggestions have not been acted upon, the reader must ascribe the error to that opinionativeness, phrase-love, and general self-contentedness, with which Nature indulgently endows some writers in lieu of other gifts.

While sitting at the Bolton Congress of 1872, when news came of the death of Professor Maurice, and seeing with the mind's eye the old familiar faces flitting, as it were, round the hall—the faces which have gone, as Bamford expresses it, through the "Pass of Death," and greet us no more—watching the vacant places (growing more numerous every Congress) of those who bore the heat and burden of the unregarded day of



Co-operation—whose buoyant, cheery voices we shall never hear again—I desired, more than before, to write some history of that new power of industry which will grow mightier year by year.

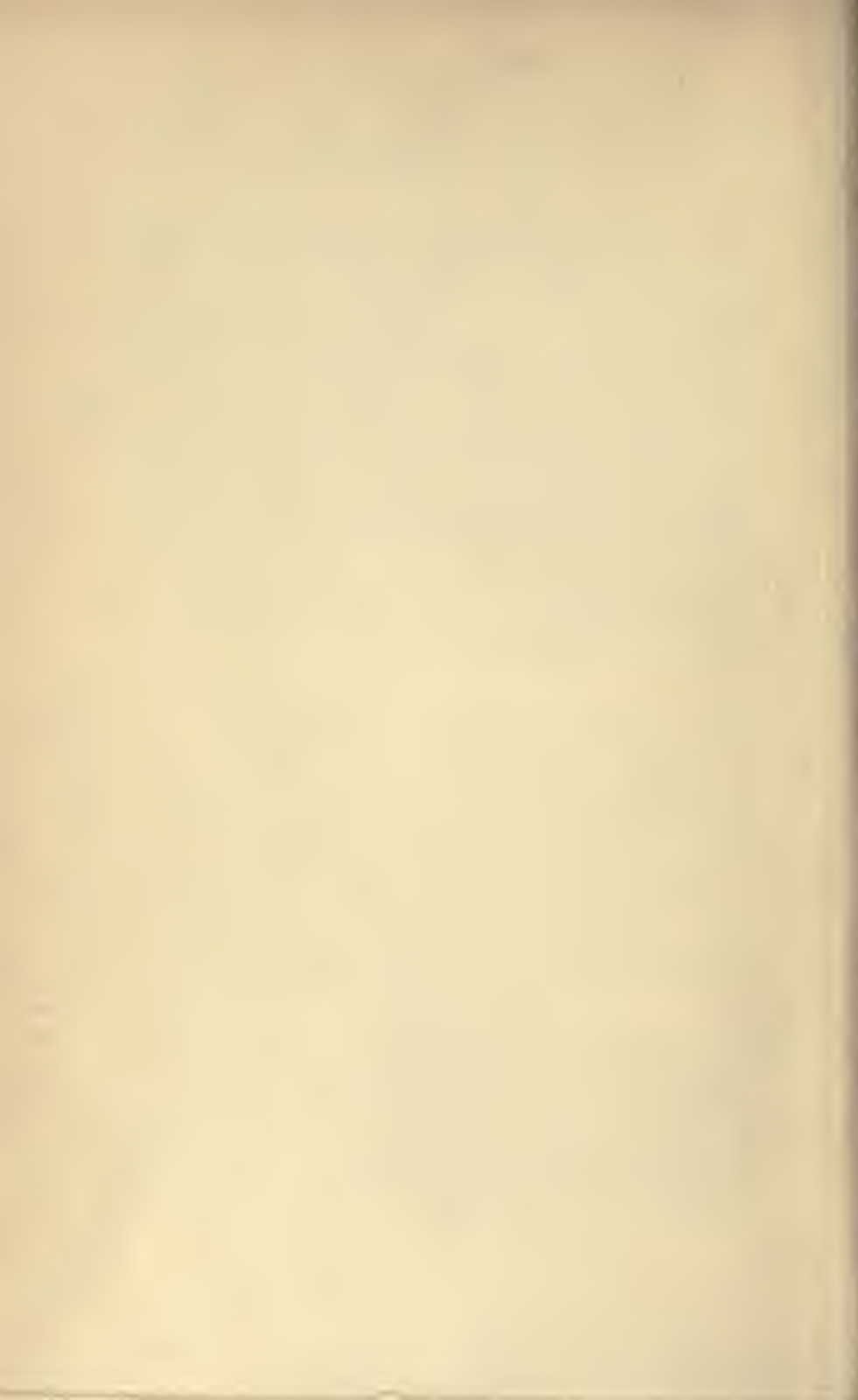
For loans of works of reference my acknowledgments are due to Wm. Henry King Spark, of Skirsgil Park, Penrith, for a valuable collection of books in his possession, collected, bound, and annotated by Francis Place. Save for the discerning foresight and interest of Mr. Place in the welfare of the working people, many of the most remarkable facts concerning their social and political life would be now unknown; also to Mr. Thomas Allsop, of Redhill; Mr. Truelove, of London; Mr. David Crossley, of Brighouse; Mr. Melsom, of Liverpool; Mr. George Simpson, of Prospect House, Mottram; Mr. R. B. Reed, senr., of Winlaton; and Mr. Henry Slatter, of Tunbridge Wells, for the use of volumes, pamphlets, and papers illustrative of my subject.

G. J. H.

NEWCASTLE CHAMBERS,

ESSEX STREET, TEMPLE BAR, LONDON,

*June, 1875.*



## PREFACE TO VOL. II. OF 1879

---

IN inscribing this volume to Mr. Bright, a representative of my native town of Birmingham, my object was to acknowledge how much the working class owed to him for maintaining in hostile days the great principle of political and commercial freedom, without which self-help is impossible to the people.

At that time I was not aware of what Abraham Greenwood related years after, that one morning subsequent to the resolution being carried, putting an end to profit sharing in the Spinning Mill of the pioneers, Mr. Bright met him in the street, and suggested that the resolution should be reconsidered at another meeting. Mr. Bright had spoken at times to his parliamentary friends of the great Partnership enterprise in the Pioneer Mills of his townsmen, and regretted what had taken place. Had the resolution been rediscussed, with the knowledge of Mr. Bright's interest in it, the decision, I believe, would have been different, and the fortune of labour changed for the better by it.

Evil days befel me during the progress of the First Part. Though I could see my way through my subject, I could not see my subject when it was through. Fortunately for the reader, Mr. Walter Morrison, to whose friendship I owed the means of writing this History, had the kindness to see the book through the press for me. Otherwise I might have been afraid to recover my sight, lest I should come to read my own pages.

Once I had a printer—not deficient in care and intelligence—who would insert an enraging misconception of some doubtful word I had written. I asked, "How came you to think I meant that? It is neither common sense, nor theological sense, nor legal sense" (the most uncertain sense known). "Well," he answered. "I thought so too, but I supposed it one of your quaintnesses of expression." So I

counselled the Co-operative Printers when sending them my MS. to stop at any "quaintness" at which they stumbled. In some places I am afraid they have betrayed me. The previous volume met with more favour from critics, both in Great Britain and America, than I expected. If this volume fares as well, I shall be more than content; for those who said it "was not interesting" said it was "useful," and those who said it "was not useful" thought it was "interesting."

Travelling to distant places of new co-operative enterprise, seeing for myself the conditions under which they had been made; editing reports of Co-operative Congresses; listening to the speeches and daily conversation of the new race of co-operators, in order to be sure what manner of men they were, and to judge from what they said, what mastery they had of its principles; then writing controversial pamphlets in order to elicit the views of adversaries and learn their quality and reach of discernment; taking part in discussions at store meetings to discover what thoughts were uppermost and what passions lay below, have been well rewarded. It would be an abuse of the attention of the reader, to beguile him with mere picturesque incidents, and conceal from him the motives. The only useful history of a movement is a history of its ideas. The animating idea which never slept or slumbered, which moved the most diverse co-operators, which was oft defeated, but never extinguished, covered with ridicule, but never made ashamed, which returned again and again to generous-minded, equity-loving men, was not distrust of succeeding themselves by competition, but dislike of it as the sole method of progress. Co-operation was born of the feeling that at best unmitigated competition was war, and though war had its bards and its heroic memories, there was murder in its march; and humanity was imposture, it progress could not be accomplished by nobler means. What an enduring truce is to war, Copartnership Co-operation is to the never-ceasing conflict between Labour and Capital. It is the Peace of Industry.

G. J. H.

NEWCASTLE CHAMBERS,

22, ESSEX STREET, TEMPLE BAR, LONDON,

*December 1, 1878.*



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## NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

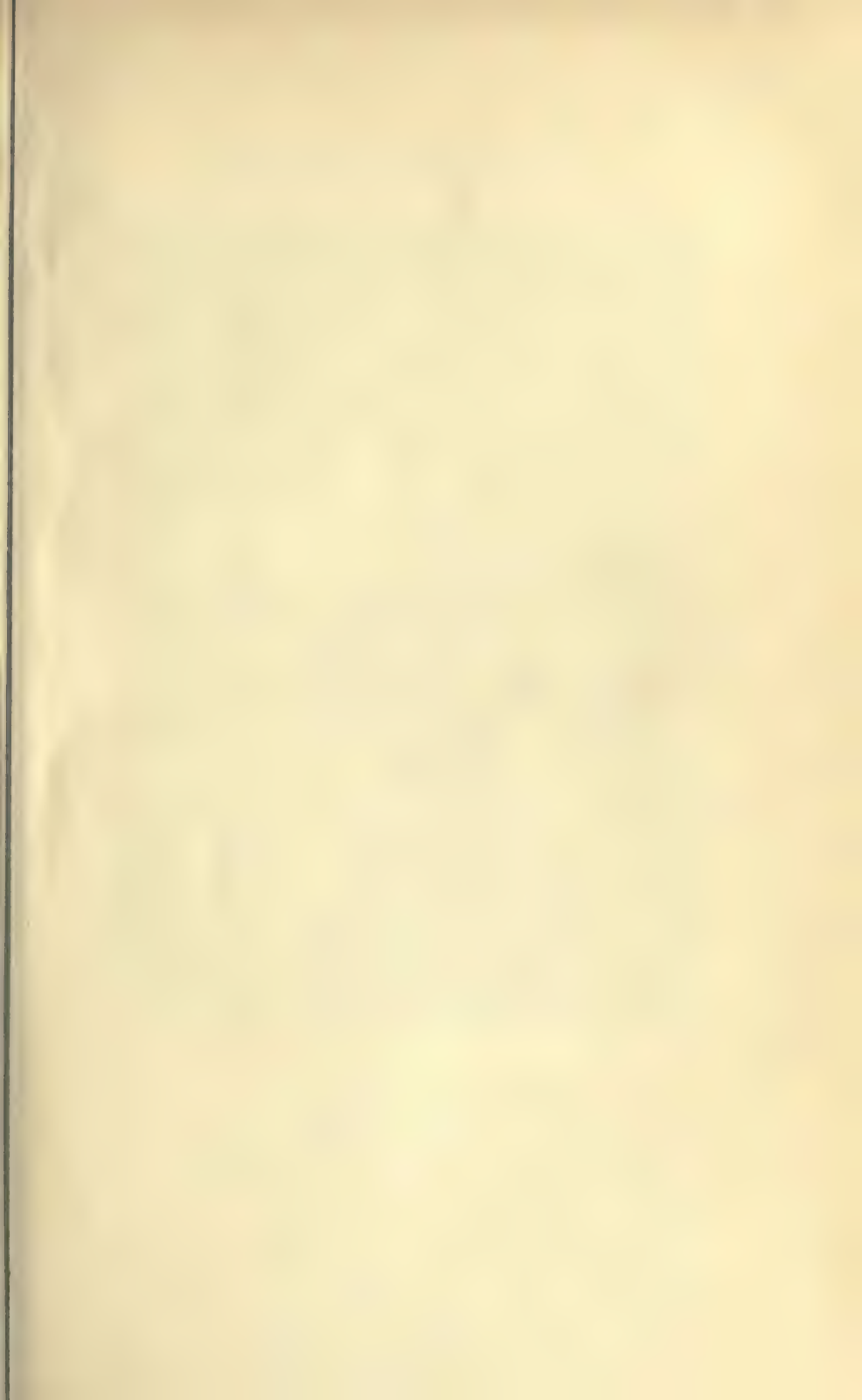
1. Wendell Phillips was invited to our Co-operative Congress in 1876. He was the greatest American orator in the perilous Anti-Slavery agitation whenever equity to industry was in question. He was always spoken of in America as the "noblest Roman of them all." His portrait is from a photograph which he gave me in his own house in Boston but a short time before his death.

2. The old Socialist Institution is the type of many of the earliest places of meeting, and remains unchanged. Rochdale Co-operation began there. (See "History of the Rochdale Pioneers.")

3. At the end of the eighteenth century the Corn Mill of Hull charged high prices; to remedy this a few co-operators set up an Anti-Mill—a mill against mills. It is the earliest relic of Co-operation in England.

4. The portrait of Robert Owen is by his friend the elder Pickersgill, in the days of Owen's early popularity. The original is in the possession of William Tebb, of Rede Hall, Burstow.

5. The Toad Lane Store is where the Rochdale Pioneers commenced business in 1844. A Swiss artist has delineated the Doffers from the mill who assembled to ridicule the humble beginning.





Wendell  
Wendell Phillips



PART I  
*THE PIONEER PERIOD*  
1812-1844



## CHAPTER I

## NATURE OF CO-OPERATION

"Distribution should undo excess,  
And each man have enough."—*King Lear*.

It is the duty of him who pleads a cause, or solicits the attention of the public to any subject, to state distinctly what the subject is—if he knows it; so that those who confer upon him the favour of their attention at the outset may possess the means of deciding whether or no they will continue it.

Dr. Furnivall could tell all about the origin of the term Co-operation and when it first crept into our language. I find less of it than I expected in quarters in which I have looked. "The Encyclopædia Metropolitana," 1845, says the French have the word *co-opérer*, the Spaniards *co-operar*, the Italians *co-operare*, the Latin *co-operare*, and derive it from *co-* and *operari*, which simply means to work—to labour together, to endeavour for some common purpose. Sir Thomas More, speaking of the Sacrament, mentions that "in certain respects it doth nothing work, nor *co-operāt* thereto." Crashaw, in his "Sacred Poems," writes :—

"Bring all your lutes and harps of heav'n and earth;  
Whate'er *co-operates* to the common mirth."

Hammond, in his "Sermons," was, so far as I am aware, the first to use the word in the form with which we are now so familiar. He says, "Men will see the original of all the wealth, called such, immediately from God; without any *co-operation* of ours." Holland, in his "Plutarch," makes a



quotation from Timotheus, the poet, in which a form of the word which has never come into use, is employed :—

“ Both boldness stout and fortitude,  
With mental discipline,  
In war, which are *co-operant*,  
With virtue doth combine.”

In Boyle's Life there is given a pretty instance of the personal form of the term : “ And the success will perhaps invite many more to be *co-operators* with the truth.”

Co-operation, in the industrial sense of the word, means the equitable division of profits with worker, capitalist, and consumer, concerned in the undertaking. From the commencement of human society Co-operation has been common in the sense of two or more persons uniting to attain an end which each was unable to effect singly. As society grew, crowds were coerced into acting together by king or chief, who took the profit. In modern days the capitalist has it. It is still common to regard the labourer as being under great obligation for mere subsistence, while he aids in creating the wealth of his employer. The new Co-operation, of which I here write, begins in mutual help, with a view to end in a common competence. A co-operative society commences in persuasion, proceeds by consent, seeks success by common efforts, incurs risks, and shares losses, intending that all its members shall proportionately share whatever benefits are secured. The equality sought is not a mad equality of

“ Equal division of unequal earnings,”<sup>1</sup>

but an equitable award of gains proportionate to work done. There is equality under the law when every man can obtain justice, however low his condition or small his means; there is equality of protection when none may assault or kill the humblest person without being made accountable; there is civil equality when the evidence of all is valid in courts of justice,

<sup>1</sup> Ebenezer Elliott wrote the best description in our language of what communism is *not*. Elliott repeated it to me amid the charming hedgerows, where he wrote his song of “ The Wonders of the Lane ” :—

“ What is a Communist ? One who hath yearnings  
For equal division of unequal earnings,  
Idler or bungler, or both, he is willing  
To fork out his penny and pocket your shilling.”

irrespective of speculative opinion ; there is equality of citizenship when all offices and honours are open to merit ; there is equality of taxation when all are made to contribute to the support of the State according to their means ; and there is equality in a co-operative society, when the right of every worker, shareholder, or purchaser is recognised to a share of the common profit, in the proportion to which he contributes to it, in capital, or labour, or trade—by hand or head. There is no complete Co-operation where this equality is not the rule.

Co-operation, after being long declared innovatory and impracticable, has been discovered to be both old and ordinary. Mr. John Macdonell counts Jacob tending Laban's flocks as a very early co-operator, he being a servant directly interested in the profits of his master.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Nasse has shown that there existed agricultural communities in Europe in the Middle Ages, and that there was a co-operative use of land in England which it would be deemed revolutionary to propose now. It is remembered now that Greek sailors in the Levant, American sailors engaged in the whale fishery and China trade, the Chinese traders in Manilla, the Cornwall lead miners, and the lead and copper miners of Flintshire and Cumberland, have long been either equal or partial participators in profits. The Metayer system<sup>2</sup> is a familiar illustration with political economists. A modern author, who has written with discernment of social theorists, says, "The words Co-operation and Co-operative have been used by communist writers to denote that all the members of a community are to work together for the common benefit, instead of working, as at present, each on his own account."<sup>3</sup> This explanation is on the line of truth, and goes forward some distance upon it.

Co-operation turns toil into industry, which is labour animated—working willingly, knowing the reason why—because the profit of each, in proportion to his work, is

<sup>1</sup> "Survey of Political Economy," chap. xv. p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> "The principle of the Metayer system is that the labourer, or peasant, makes his engagement directly with the landowner, and pays, not a fixed rent, either in money or in kind, but a certain proportion of the produce, or rather of what remains of the produce, after deducting what is considered necessary to keep up the stock. The proportion is usually, as the name imports, one-half ; but in several districts in Italy it is two-thirds" (Mill, "Political Economy," People's Edition, p. 183).

<sup>3</sup> Charles Morrison, "Labour and Capital," p. 111.

secured to him. Co-operation leaves nobody out who works. Those who do not know this do not understand Co-operation ; those who do know it and do not mean it, are traitors to the principle. Those who mean it and do not take steps to secure it, or are silent when others evade it, or do not advocate it when occasion offers, are unseeing or supine. Co-operation touches no man's fortune ; seeks no plunder ; causes no disturbance in society ; gives no trouble to statesmen ; it enters into no secret associations ; it needs no trades union to protect its interests ; it contemplates no violence ; it subverts no order ; it envys no dignity ; it accepts no gift, nor asks any favour ; it keeps no terms with the idle, and it will break no faith with the industrious. It is neither mendicant, servile, nor offensive ; it has its hand in no man's pocket, and does not mean that any other hands shall remain long or comfortably in its own ; it means self-help, self-dependence, and such share of the common competence as labour shall earn or thought can win.



## CHAPTER II

## THE EVIL DAYS BEFORE CO-OPERATION BEGAN

"Defend me, therefore, Common Sense, say I,  
 From reveries so airy—from the toil  
 Of dropping buckets into empty wells,  
 And growing old in drawing nothing up."—COWPER.

MATTERS were at a very bad pass—as they had often been before—with the working people in England when Co-operation began. There was a certain statute of Edward VI., which set forth in its preamble "that partly by the foolish pity and mercy of them which should have seen godly laws executed" the poor and unemployed had become troublesome : and therefore, in order that godliness might do its duty to society, it was enacted that—"If any person shall bring to two justices of peace any runagate servant, or any other which liveth idly or loiteringly by the space of three days, they shall cause that idle and loitering servant or vagabond to be marked with a hot iron on the breast with the mark of V, and adjudge him to be slave to the same person that brought him for two years after, who shall take the said slave and give him bread, water, or small drink, and refuse him meat, and cause him to work, by beating, chaining, or otherwise, in such work as he shall put him unto, be it never so vile : and if he shall absent himself from his said master, by the space of fourteen days, then he shall be adjudged by two justices of peace to be marked on the forehead, or the ball of the cheek, with a hot iron, with the sign of an S, and further shall be adjudged to be slave to his said master for ever."

In the days when this Act was passed, it was easy to see that gentlemen knew what they were about ; and at the beginning



of the last century there were worthy and worshipping persons, who regretted, as many do still, the decay of vigour in the governing classes. What they had come to in 1822 Francis Place has recorded.<sup>1</sup> In that year a poor farrier had travelled from Alnwick, in Northumberland, to London in search of work. On the same day a shopman to a grocer—long out of employ—arrived penniless from Shropshire. Both had come up to London, and met, companions in destitution, in the pens of Smithfield market, where they ventured to think they might be allowed to sleep in the bed of beasts. They were seized by constables and taken before a magistrate of the city. Both begged to be discharged, and promised to make their way home in the best way they could; but to this humble request the magistrate would not accede. He said "he was of opinion that the prisoners were not justified in coming to town without any prospect before them, for they must have known that, in the present state of trade, no one would take them in, nor would any one be justified in taking in a perfect stranger; but whether their conduct arose solely from ignorance or not he considered was immaterial; the magistrates could not know the minds of the prisoners, and could make no distinction."

The Lord Mayor agreed with the Alderman on the bench who had delivered this decision, and who consulted him. "The City magistrates," the Mayor said, "wish it to be known in the country at large that in future they should feel themselves bound to send all to hard labour for the term enacted (which was not less than one, and as much as three, months), whether they were actuated by a vicious spirit of vagabondage, or with whatever professed object or speculation they came to town. In short, they would put the law in full force against all who could not prove reasonable assurance or certainty of employment as their motive for coming to London." Farriers and shopmen unable to obtain employment in their own parish were warned that they must stay there and perish.

In 1825 a dinner was given to Joseph Hume, M.P., in Edinburgh, on which occasion Francis Jeffrey made a speech in favour of the combination of workmen. The substance of Mr. Jeffrey's speech occupies twenty-three pages octavo.

<sup>1</sup> "Principles of Population."

Judging from the facility and persistence with which some Scotch bailies who come to England on deputations speak,<sup>1</sup> this dinner may have lasted a week. The purport of Mr. Jeffrey's speech was to explain the toast "Freedom of Labour," which was expressed as follows: "Freedom of Labour. But let the labourer recollect that in exercising his own rights he cannot be permitted to violate the rights of others." It was generous of Francis Jeffrey, himself a Whig reviewer, to speak at all in defence of combination by workmen;<sup>2</sup> but at that time, and for years after, it was a perilous business for the labourer to attempt to unite, or to be known to be friendly with those who counselled him to do it. There was no necessity to warn them not to abuse the power they dare not use.

Now homilies are read to them against cultivating class feeling. In the day of which I write, it was a great point to get them to understand that they were a class at all. At that time a very uncomfortable monitor of the people existed, who attracted a large share of attention, and who gave the poor a "bit of his mind," which they have not forgotten yet—the Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus. This is what he said to them, in deliberately chosen sentences, and in large type: "There is one right which a man has been generally thought to possess, which I am sure he neither can nor does possess—a right to subsistence when his labour will not fairly purchase it."<sup>3</sup> "I firmly believe," he says, "that such persons, by the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, have no claim to support." Only the rich had the right to live. Malthus had the ear of legislators, and he wrote for them; and this is what he said to them: "As a previous step to alteration in the poor-law, which would contract or stop the increase of the relief to be given, it appears to me that we are bound in justice and honour formally to disclaim the right of the poor to support."

<sup>1</sup> A Scotch deputation to Downing Street, headed by a Lord Provost of Edinburgh, first caused me to notice this. The chief speaker was Robert Chambers. He had been kept some years out of his well-earned dignity, because he was suspected of writing the "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation" (it being unlawful to consider creation natural); yet I saw him fasten on a Prime Minister, who was overdue in Parliament, but could not extricate himself from that pertinacious visitor.

<sup>2</sup> The Combination Laws were repealed the year before the speech—1824.

<sup>3</sup> Essays, vol. iii. p. 154.

"To this end," he continues, "I should propose a regulation to be made declaring that no child born from any marriage, taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of this law, and no illegitimate child born two years from same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance."<sup>1</sup>

This language informed the poor that they had better get good information as to how things are going on in the world before they come into it. He would logically interdict "lying-in" houses as encouraging sexual improvidence—he would abolish hospital aid for diseases arising from poverty. The St. Augustine tone prevailed in the churches. Piety was not only dogmatic, it was insolvent. It dictated to men their beliefs. The struggling, whom it could not help—the miserable, whom it could not save, it interdicted from thinking for themselves. The workman was regarded as holding his soul under a ticket-of-leave from the churches; and men of free thought in religion, or politics, or science were treated as a criminal class. Common men were vassals—the mitre their souls—the State their means. And, what was worse, many of them had no more sense than to put themselves, like dry sticks, under the cauldron of corruption.

Historical knowledge was a weak point of the people. Those of them who were politicians believed that the history of the world began with the French Revolution. Old Midland politicians half believe now that liberty began with the Birmingham Political Union of 1830. A stout Radical of mark in Bradford, Squire Farrar, built himself a house early in the last century, and over the door, cut in stone, still appears the date of the declaration of American Independence; and there is a general impression in many quarters here, as well as across the Atlantic, that the world recommenced at that period.

However, without troubling much when the world began, workmen were to be found who were bent on improving it. Trades unionists were among the most active of this class. We need not go far for an example which will sufficiently illustrate their condition and their sense as well as their spirit.

The wool combers and stuff weavers of Bradford published

<sup>1</sup> Essays, vol. iii.



## EVIL DAYS BEFORE CO-OPERATION BEGAN 11

in 1825 a notable statement of the workman's case in local verse, which commences thus :—

"Lads, pray what's the matter?  
Are you with master about to fight?  
'Yes, sir, we are, and well we might,  
For let us work hard as we will,  
We're ne'er the better for it still.'"

Bradford men always had a stout, unyielding way of expressing dissatisfaction with their condition. So the Bradford Homer proceeds to sound this note of battle, of which the world has heard a good deal since. Answering the masters, the poet sings :—

"We are most willing  
To work twelve pen'orth for a shilling.  
But more we neither can nor will;  
We'd rather all, at once, stand still,  
And form a UNION of our own  
As men have done in many a town."

The verse of the stuff weavers' bard, it must be owned, is a little woolly, but its texture is virile.

Things were not in a satisfactory state in England when men like Southey and Coleridge thought of seeking in another land more hopeful conditions of life. Southey's noble invocation to the wealthier classes, said—

"Train up thy children, England.  
Where hast thou mines—but in their industry?  
Thy bulwarks where—but in their breasts?  
O grief, then—grief and shame,  
If in this flourishing land there should be dwellings  
Where the new-born babe doth bring unto its parents' soul  
No joy!—where squalid poverty  
Gives it the scanty bread of discontent."

The rise of machinery was the circumstance that filled the working class with despair. The capitalist able to use machinery grew rich, the poor who were displaced by it were brought in great numbers to the poor-house. A man so strong-thinking as Horace Greeley had his mind inclined to protection by the misery he witnessed in his father's household, when handloom weaving was superseded by merciless inventions. Even Owen exclaimed, "We are pressed down by

<sup>1</sup> It was a popular quotation long after, and is not untrue in 1905. The *Economist* of 1821 considered that "it deserved to be written in diamonds."



the weight of inventions and improvements.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in 1807, things were so hopeless for the people that Mrs. Barbauld wrote that “they considered even depredators usefully employed in lessening the inequalities of rank.”

Goldsmith relates how he found the reflective shoemaker who had but one regret, that by changing his street he had abandoned a stall where a successor “had amassed a handsome fortune,” and died at last over his lapstone, “with seven pounds, all in hard gold,” stitched in the waistband of his lucky breeches.

The introduction of machinery for years lowered wages, and pushed the mass of the workmen with increased force against the walls of the workhouse. Mr. Thompson, of Cork, commenced an address, in 1826, to the distressed Spitalfields weavers, thus: “All kinds of labour, agricultural and manufacturing, are rapidly approaching their fated equality—the starvation price, the lowest that even in times of average employment will support a miserable existence.” If one whom fortune had placed above want, and education above prejudice, had these impressions, no wonder the poor desponded.

No wonder Social Reformers became world-sick. They called this the “old” world, as though they had a new one on hand. Mr. Charles Bray, the early friend of George Eliot, wrote so late as 1844 to ask whether “commerce and the mechanical arts do not really point to a *declining age*?” All the dismal facts of the day were brought to the front, as though society had the small-pox and had never been vaccinated; whereas the great creature called society has “a pulse like a cannon.” True, there is “something the matter with its head,” since the rich could display themselves conspicuously in the midst of a squalid people, as some one has said, like jewels in the hair of a mendicant woman.

True, Carlyle is a grim and often a brutal preacher, but to him is greatly owing the improved regard since shown for craftsmen. He created “captains of industry,” who thought

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Owen's speech at the Holkham agricultural meeting, on his health being proposed by Mr. Coke. Even landlords had their vicissitudes in those days. Then Mr. Coke's land let at 15s. per acre; a fall in the value of produce might throw it out of cultivation, reducing it to 5s. per acre, involving a loss of £40,000 a year. Even then the owner would probably not need to come upon the parish, while the weaver or mechanic would.

of equity as well as gain.<sup>1</sup> The capitalist was a new feudal lord more cruel than the king who reigned by conquest. The old feudal lord had some care for his vassal, and provided him with sustenance and dwelling. The new lord of capital charges himself with no duty of the kind, and does not even acknowledge the labourer's right to live. His condition is no affair of his employer. Thoughtfulness for the workman might be manifested as an act of patronage, but not as an act of duty or right.

Nevertheless there are few so poor or miserable in civilised society as they would be in savage society. They may die early of insufficient food and through an unhealthy dwelling in a civilised town, but they would die earlier and suffer more as savages ; while every one may find twenty chances of rising to some sort of comfort, and even to riches, which would never happen to one savage in ten thousand.

Sir Richard Burton, in his "Unexplored Syria," relates that he went out to visit Mount Lebanon. Lured by writers, whom he says had "Holy Land on the brain," he found life there, though ages removed from the barbarian state, such that he exclaims : "Having learned what it is, I should far prefer the comfort of Spitalfields, the ease of the Seven Dials, and the society of Southwark." Hoarded earning is the beginning of progress. Capital is the handmaid of civilisation. Lord Brabazon points out that "the higher the civilisation of a country the more marked is the difference between rich and poor."<sup>2</sup> This only means that as the refinements and luxuries of the wealthy increase, the contrast grows greater between the condition of rich and poor. This does not necessarily imply that the condition of the poor is worse than it was. This is hardly possible, seeing that in every age it is declared to be as bad as it can be, and always worse than it ever was before. Civilisation gives the poor, who are wise, a better chance than the starvation stage. If a man is Lazarus it is

<sup>1</sup> Yet he could applaud those who added pianoforte wire to the cats with which they flogged working men and women of Jamaica. Men in the negro condition, black and white, will one day have their turn of power, and Mr. Carlyle's ferocious approval will invigorate many a cat, and sharpen many a knife, for use on respectable backs and throats, unless working people learn that fairness alone brings security.

<sup>2</sup> Reports of the Condition of the Industrial Classes in Foreign Countries.

better for him to catch the crumbs falling from the table or Dives than lie waiting for those which may drop from brother Lazarus's table.

The sole sensible question for the poor to ask is, Can they better themselves? The French, demoralised by centralisation, lacked the English habit of working for majorities and winning them by agitation. The tradition of the camp in France was their disqualification for progress by reason. It is showier, swifter, and more natural to man to fight out a difference than persuade men out of it. The peril and imprisonments which resulted from political movements in England the first half or the last century were occasioned by men who had been in the army and wanted their associates to arm.

To live in a state in which capital can exist is an advance. It is only in that stage that emancipation is possible. It is by concert in industrial operations that wealth arises. A man being one of the chief instruments in creating wealth, he ought to get a reasonable share of it. This he may obtain, not by taking it from those who have amassed it, which can only be done by bloodshed, and waste, and by setting a precedent which will expose him to similar attacks in his turn. One remedy is by employing the economy of Co-operation to save capital and entering into industrial partnerships to earn it. This has been the lesson taught by co-operative thinkers, and by them alone.



## CHAPTER III

## THE UTOPIANISTS WHO FORESAW BETTER TIMES

"Now if . . . any one should propose anything that he had either read in history or observed in his travels, the rest would think that the reputation of their wisdom would sink, and that their interests would be much depressed if they could not run it down, . . . as if this were a great mischief, that any should be found wiser than his ancestors."—SIR THOMAS MORE, *Utopia*.

"WORLD-MAKERS" seems a more relevant term than Utopianists. Those conversant with the history of social projectors will know that the phrase "world-making" is a fair description of the ambitious schemes of most of them.

Co-operation in England was born of world-makers, and it becomes more intelligible when its order of descent is seen. An idea recurring from age to age, and among various peoples, may be a pertinacious one, since experience shows that silly ideas are more likely to recur than wise ones—folly being ever ready-made, while sense has to be acquired. But if it be a matter of history that certain ideas, oft recurring and widely agitating dissimilar peoples, have been mostly originated by philosophers and only promoted by thinking people, the presumption is that there is something relevant to human needs in such projects. Co-operative ideas have been of this character. Men of sense and spirit want to know how it is that knaves are born on the bank and honest men in the ditch. Only the wise and bold venture on untried existence. Then there have been in all ages classes of men who found things so much to their advantage that they loudly recommended mankind not on any account to disturb them, knowing well that men are never the same any more after they have once seen a new thing.



When Co-operation arose nearly everybody said it was contrary to human nature. What was new to them they concluded was new to humanity.<sup>1</sup>

The sentiment of mine and thine, which now seems part of human nature, was once an invention. "Even when agriculture had been introduced," Herder remarks, "it cost some pains to limit men to separate fields and establish the distinctions of mine and thine."<sup>2</sup> Mr. James Mill says, in his "History of British India," that "the different benefits included under the idea of property, at different periods of society, are not the offspring of nature but the creatures of will chosen by society as that arrangement with which is, or is pretended to be, the best for all." According to Aristotle, there were nations who held the land in common and divided the produce, and there were others who divided the land and stored the produce in common. Minos, who, according to the legend, aimed at establishing equality among the Cretans, would not suffer any of them, whatever might be their rank, to lead an indolent life. Persons of all classes sat at common tables, partook of the same diet, and at the public expense. These laws subsisted in force for nearly a thousand years—a long time for a scheme of life to last which would now be held to be contrary to human nature. Lycurgus governed Sparta as grandly as Minos did Crete. Obedience to the law, and the dread of living for himself, were the earliest lessons imprinted on the mind of a Lacedemonian; and this education is reputed to have endured four hundred years. This "dread" of a man living for himself alone has been long extinct in modern society. It is a true saying that it is liberty which is old; it is despotism which is new. Plato had the sagacity to foresee and reason upon the danger of over-population, and considered it would be impossible to preserve equality in any State without regulating the number of the inhabitants—a question society has not made up its mind to look at yet.

The noblest body of Jews, unlike any others of which history has made mention, were the Essenes. They deemed

<sup>1</sup> Like the Irish peasant whom Dr. King met, and asked whether he would rather live upon wheaten bread or potatoes, answered, "Sir, I like bread well enough once in a way, but potatoes are more *natural*" (*Co-operative Magazine*, 1826).

<sup>2</sup> Herder, "Phil. Hist.," vol. i. p. 372.

riches to consist in frugality and contentment; nor had they any slaves among them. All were free, and all in their turn administered to others. Among them there was no house, however private, which was not open to fraternal reception. Nor were they enervated by their communistic principles. Josephus attests the heroic fortitude with which they met their sufferings in defence of their opinions and mode of life. Jesus evidently thought well of their principles, and commended them. But not himself foreseeing the rise of the commercial and manufacturing systems of Europe, he left no directions—which approve themselves to practical men—for continuing a plan of life in which men should have “all things in common.” Indeed, political economists, with one consent, ignore him in that great department of progress which is their especial study. Nothing can be more disastrous to the struggling poor than that a teacher of the highest repute among them should bequeath to them plans of social life so crudely stated that men should be contemptuously counted as “enthusiasts” who seek to reduce them to practice.

The “Utopia” had great influence on social thinkers. Considering More’s position, and the eminence of the persons and interests which were satirised in his “Utopia,” it was a bold book.<sup>1</sup> What kind of book the “Utopia” is, and what manner of man the brave author was, has been told by one whose pen lends charm to the meanest fact and worthily recounts the noblest. Mr. Ruskin says: “We have known what communism is—for our fathers knew it. . . . First, it means that everybody must work for his dinner. That much, perhaps, you thought you knew. The Chelsea farmer and stout Catholic, born in Milk Street, London, three hundred and ninety-one years ago, 1480,<sup>2</sup> planned a commune flowing with milk and honey, and otherwise Elysian, and called it the ‘Place of Well-being,’ or Utopia. . . . Listen how matters really are managed there.” [It is Sir Thomas More who says what follows.] “Consider how great a part of all other nations is quite idle. First, women generally do little, who

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Burnet says the tenderest part of the whole work is the representation he gives of Henry the Seventh’s Court, in which his disguise is so thin that the matter would not have been much plainer if he had named him.

<sup>2</sup> “Fors Clavigera,” Letter 7. 1871.

are the half of mankind ; and if some few women are diligent their husbands are idle. Then consider the great company of idle priests, and of those that are called religious men ; add to these all the rich men, chiefly those that have estates in lands, who are called noblemen and gentlemen, together with their families, made up of idle persons that do nothing but go swaggering about. Reckon in with these all those strong and lusty beggars that go about pretending some disease in excuse for their begging ; and upon the whole account you will find that the number of those by whose labours mankind is supplied is much less than you did perhaps imagine. Then consider how few of those that work are employed in labours that men do really need ; for we, who measure all things by money, give occasion to many trades that are both vain and superfluous, and that serve only to support riot and luxury. . . . If all those who labour about useless things were set to more profitable trades ; and if all that number that languish out their life in sloth and idleness, of whom every one consumes as much as any two of the men that are at work do, were forced to labour, you may easily imagine that a small proportion of time would serve for doing all that is either necessary, profitable, or pleasant to mankind." He who said this, Mr. Ruskin adds, "was one of the sternest Roman Catholics of his stern time ; and at the fall of Cardinal Wolsey became Lord High Chancellor of England in his stead."

Sir Thomas More wrote in 1516. One hundred and forty years later—1656—Harrington dedicated his agrarian "Oceana" to Cromwell. Hume considered it to be "a work of genius and invention, and the most valuable model of a commonwealth which had been offered to the public." Cromwell thought there was mischief in it, and is stated to have said that "what he had won by the sword he was not going to be scribbled out of by Mr. Harrington."

One hundred and fifty years after his death any espousal of his scheme brought persons into difficulties ; and His Majesty's Attorney-General, in 1793, spoke of him in a very unpleasant way. When the abusive Attorney-General sat down, Erskine rejoined : "Yet this very Harrington, this low blackguard as he is described, was descended (you may see his pedigree at



the Herald's office for sixpence) from eight dukes, three marquises, seventy earls, twenty-seven viscounts, and thirty-seven barons, sixteen of whom were knights of the Garter." He was the most affectionate servant of Charles I., from whom he never concealed his opinions, for it is observed by Wood that the king greatly affected his company ; but when they happened to talk of a commonwealth he could scarcely endure it. "I know not," says Toland, "which most to commend—the king for trusting an honest man, though a republican, or Harrington for owning his principles while he served a king." At Charles's death the "*Oceana*" was written. It was seized by Cromwell as a libel, and the way in which it was recovered was remarkable. Harrington waited on Cromwell's daughter to beg for his book, and on entering her apartment snatched up her child. He said : "I know what you feel as a mother ; feel, then, for me. Your father has got my child," meaning the "*Oceana*." It was afterwards restored on her petition, Cromwell answering, in his tolerant way, "Let him have his book ; if my government is made to stand, it has nothing to fear from paper shot."<sup>1</sup>

Forty years after Harrington's scheme of public life founded on equipoise, came the proposal, by John Bellers, of a College of Industry—a remarkable instance of practical and co-operative sagacity. It appeared in 1696, and was the first known instance of a complete plan of an industrial community for immediate adoption. Robert Owen, who received it from Francis Place, had it printed in the old type in which it first appeared. Bellers' scheme required £18,000 in the money of that time to carry it out. Had it been adopted by the statesmen to whom he addressed it, pauperism would have become a tradition in England before this time. Like Mr. Owen, Bellers appealed directly to the heads of the State, and prayed the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled to give ear to his plan, "by which the common people could be trained in the art of taking care of themselves." He also addressed the "thinking and public-spirited," who appear not to have been more numerous in those days than now. He adopted for his motto the wholesome words, "Industry brings plenty," and

<sup>1</sup> Erskine's defence of Paine, before Lord Kenyon, 1793. This was the occasion, according to Erskine, when Cromwell made the remark quoted.



the uncompromising intimations that "a sluggard should be clothed with rags," and "he that will not work shall not eat." Lest these sentiments should escape notice, Bellers placed them on his title-page. His pamphlet was "printed and published by T. Sowle, in White Hart Court, in Gracious Street, London, 1696." Bellers began by quoting Lord Chief Justice Hale, who said that "they that are rich are stewards of their wealth"—a doctrine which was thought very new when first Sir John Sinclair and afterwards Mr. Thomas Drummond preached it in the House of Commons. "The best account," according to Lord Chief Justice Hale, "which the rich could give of their wealth was to employ it in the reformation and relief of those who want either money or wisdom;" and reminded them that "he who said, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' was one of the worst of men." "The want of a due provision," the Chief Justice said, "for the education and relief of the poor in a way of industry is that which fills the gaols with malefactors and the kingdom with idle persons. A sound, prudent method for an industrious education of the poor will give a better remedy against these corruptions than all the gibbets and whipping-posts in the kingdom." Bellers himself remarks that "it is the *interest* of the rich to take care of the poor." He seems to have had an idea in his mind that there were no poor, some of whose ancestors had not been rich, and that there were none rich then, some of whose ancestors had not been poor; and that in the revolutions of society the posterity of the rich might be poor again, and that it would be good sense to put a stop to any more people becoming poor. He insisted that an industrial college could produce all its members required. The shopkeepers of this generation will be astonished to learn that their original enemy was Bellers. He enumerated persons and things of which he intended to save the cost in his system: He named shopkeepers and all their servants and dependents. Bad debts. (He was evidently opposed to the credit system.) Saving the labour of many women and children. Saving of much separate house room, firing, and cooking. Securing that the land should be better tilled by the labourers being owners.

The profits of the college were to be divided among the shareholders, but the workers were to be guaranteed security

in and for all things necessary in health or sickness, single or married, wife or children, and if the parents die early, the children would be well educated and preserved from misery. The workers as they grew older were to be abated one hour a day of their work. Punishments were to be rather abatements of food than stripes, and that those deserving of greater punishments should be expelled. His plan for teaching languages to the children contained the germ of that system which Mr. Prendegast has since made famous, and Bellers proposed the same abridgment of the hours of learning for children which Sir Edwin Chadwick mercifully justified. Bellers proposed, as Pestalozzi and Froebel have since done, "*to raise the child's love to what he should learn.*" Beating children to make them learn he thought silly, and spoiled their natural parts. "Understanding," he contended, "must rather be distilled as children can take it, than be driven into them." He was for giving them sensible employment, as he thought a silly employment left the mind silly. "A good education," he said, "though with but a little estate, makes a happier man than a great estate without it."

Bellers gave no account of himself as to who he was—what station he occupied—from what reading or experience he derived his thoughts, and nobody has asked; but he was clearly sensible and original. His scheme is worth consulting by any community-maker, for it defines the number and proportions of persons in every department of industry who should be brought together. His was not a voluntary, but a State scheme of co-operation, and the only one ever proposed in England. He ended his proposal by answering a number of objections which he considered might be brought against it. One is: "Why should he propose to get the chief share of the profit of the poor's labour, and not let them have all the profit themselves, but give the larger portion to the rich, who are to supply the funds to the college?" His answer is: "Because the rich have no other means of living but by the labour of others; as the landlord by the labour of his tenants, and the tradesmen by the labour of the mechanics." It did not much matter that Bellers gave the surplus to the capitalists, seeing that he first made it a condition that every reasonable want of every member should be well provided for.

His college of labour would have stood a good chance of succeeding because it would have been *governed*. It was no sentimental scheme in which those who set it going found the capital, and those who used it did as they pleased. Bellers' college was a despotism founded on industrial justice—*i.e.*, free participation by the workers in the advantages they created. I learn, through the researches of Mr. W. E. A. Axon, that John Bellers was a member of the Society of Friends, the father of Fettiplace Bellers. John Bellers died February 8, 1725, and was buried in Bunhill Fields.

The reprint by Owen of Bellers' book made a great impression when it appeared, and was reproduced in periodicals. There was another writer subsequent to this social-minded Quaker—one Morelly, a Frenchman, who wrote in the eighteenth century. Mr. Owen was much influenced by what he came to know of his views. Francis Place gave some account of Morelly. Morelly was distinguished for the precision of his ideas and for the mathematical nature of his mind. He said the "problem" of social reform was "to find that state of things in which it should be impossible for any one to be depraved or poor." No theorist ever expressed the work to be done so well before,—no social reformer has expressed it better since. This is what social thinkers are always aiming to bring about.

The Marquis of Mirabeau, in a letter dated 1762, made mention of a family of the name of Pinon, living a few leagues from the town of Thiers, in Auvergne, France, the head of which, a farmer, having lived to see his sons marry, requested them to continue a distinct tribe, and to maintain inviolably the sacred bond of union, by community of wealth and property amongst them. "After having been established, at this period, above a century," says the marquis, "this amicable institution has so greatly prospered, that the Pinons have not only a family seat in the mountains, supplied with all the conveniences of life, with elegant apartments for strangers of the highest rank, who are treated with the most generous hospitality, but they have also several villages appertaining to them, whose clergy, lawyers, and other professional persons are branches of the same stock. The necessary arts of life are exercised in this tribe for the emolument of the whole; and



the superfluities sold at the adjacent fairs and markets, where every one carries with him his family credentials. One tradition of their origin is that an ancestor of great wealth and a numerous progeny, well advanced in years, explained to his children "that their splendid way of living must be greatly diminished if, after his death, they should, as was customary, divide his fortune into separate portions; but that, if they desired to be better economists than the rest of mankind, they should live in the united state they had done under his roof."

The Pinon case is cited because its success was based on secular reasons, which alone are of universal weight. Certain Jesuits are credited with very great success in carrying out arrangements of common life in Paraguay. But Jesuits do not encourage self-dependence in life or thought, and when their enfeebling paternalism ended, the population were impotent and idealess as children. The noble aspiration after truer and higher life, with all the perils, conflicts, and vicissitudes it involves, is better than the softest, smoothest, sleekest, and most steadfast stagnation.

The only instance in which social equality was the subject of conspiracy occurred in Paris, 1796. Its great leader was Babeuf. In those days a blind love of innovation prevailed, not alone in France but in Europe, and was strongest in Paris. Then hope and eagerness had the force of a passion. M. de Talleyrand used to say "that only those who had lived near the conclusion of the seventeenth century could realise the worth of the world to man." Gracchus Babeuf was a young man when the French Revolution occurred. Ardent, well-informed, of penetrating mind, and able to write with clearness and fire, he soon got himself into difficulties. Of what kind nothing more need be said than that it was Marat who saved him from the consequences of an order of arrest. At a later period he obtained the post of secretary to a district administration, and subsequently he got employment in the bureaux of the old commune of Paris. Mrs. Wollstonecraft, who knew Babeuf well, declared that "she had never seen any person who possessed greater abilities, or equal strength of character." His plan was to establish a system of equality by force—needless in a country which has a free press, free speech, and the right of public meetings. For these means



of progress an Englishman would fight; but, having won them, he would count himself a fool if he could not make his way with them. Babeuf was not a wild reformer in the sense of not knowing what he wanted. He had a clear and complete idea of what he would put in the place of that he intended to supersede. His object was to establish a despotism of justice and equality. Robespierre, on the other hand, held that "without the people's consent none have a right to thrust systems upon them; but with their consent, all systems should be equally accessible to them." To the credit of the French Liberals many of them objected to violent modes of attaining just objects. Certainly many of the aims of the conspirators were good. They were for abolishing mendicity as dishonouring to a free State, and for establishing a system of education in common. They regarded ignorance as a national danger. They were friendly to a policy of peace. They adopted a doctrine of non-intervention. They would not intermeddle with other nations, nor suffer other nations to intermeddle with the affairs of France. There were to be no idlers. "Nature," they said, "had imposed upon every one the obligation to work." They kept no terms with those who did nothing. Their words were: "They do nothing for the country who do not serve it by some useful occupation, and can exercise no rights in it." The common accusation is that men of social convictions seek other people's property—whereas the fact is they seek to make everybody work. This may be a very disagreeable passion; but it is not laziness, nor is it plunder. All the schemes of Utopians prove at bottom to be schemes of work and wealth-making. Shopkeepers will be interested to hear that Babeuf and his colleagues proposed to retain retail dealers. They meditated censorship of the press, which the Napoleon family afterwards put in execution. But the conspirators had a ferocious thoroughness and vigour for which Carlyle and other eminent friends of Governor Eyre, of Jamaica, would very much esteem them. They decreed on the day on which they commenced their insurrection, that "to give or execute in the name of the existing Government ('tyranny' they called it) any order whatever should be punished with instant death." Some were "to be buried under the ruins of their palaces; which ruins were

to be left in that state, as a monument to the latest posterity of the just punishment inflicted on the enemies of equality."<sup>1</sup> A dismal kingdom of equality France would have been with these murderous ruins defacing it.

Babeuf and his compatriots failed through a traitor,<sup>2</sup> and came to the block. They were brave men, neither afraid to avow their designs nor die for their cause. Babeuf's last letter to his wife contained some wise and lofty sentiments: "It belongs," he said, "to the family of a martyr of liberty to give the example of every virtue, in order to attract the esteem of all good people. I would desire my wife to do all in her power to give education to her children. I hope you will believe you were always most dear to me. Speak often of me to Camille; tell him a thousand times I bore him tenderly in my heart. Tell Caius as much when he will be capable of understanding it. I knew no other way to render you happy than by promoting the happiness of all. I have failed. I have sacrificed myself; it is for you as well as for liberty I die."

When the conspirators were sentenced, Babeuf and Darthe, the chief leaders, stabbed themselves with their daggers, and were dragged from the court by the gendarmes. Babeuf's poignard broke, and a piece remained imbedded near his heart. Both lived long enough to be beheaded next day, but their courage never forsook them. Their bodies were flung into a ditch. Some country people buried them. So ended the first and last conspiracy for equality! Its conduct justifies the high repute for ability Babeuf won. It was a masterpiece of organisation. Nothing was forgotten. Proclamations, songs, manifestoes, decrees, laws, declarations of rights, were all prepared for issue, conceived with sagacity, and written with brevity, eloquence, and fire. The labour and secret discussions

<sup>1</sup> This design shows that the *petroleuse* business, which got connected with the honest and just aims of the communalist party in France, was no new madness. Indeed, it would not be new in England. An English Conservative lord some time ago had at his breakfast-table one whom I knew to have acted in a plot to blow up London in 1848. It was a police-agent's project, but the person in question fell in with it, and it took some trouble to divert him from it. The said lord did not know of this little affair. The enterprising patriot left the country but kept up a correspondence with his noble friend.

<sup>2</sup> This was Grisel, in whom they had confided, and who had flattered, inflamed, and caressed them, as is the way of suspicious patriots. The club of Babeuf assembled in the vaults of the Pantheon, and this Grisel was the most open-mouthed scoundrel there.

gone through were immense. Nothing is more astonishing than the sublime confidence of the conspirators in human nature, to believe that no traitor would betray plans to which hundreds must have been privy. That only one was false shows that equality must have been a noble inspiration. Phillipo Buonarroti, a Florentine of high family, a reputed descendant of Michael Angelo—and his brilliant powers and daring services corroborated the belief—was a colleague of Babeuf, and afterwards published a history—with documents which he had the courage to preserve—of the famous attempt of Babeuf. Among them were the “Songs for the Streets,” which had not been overlooked. Equality had its Marseillaise as well as Republicanism, though its notes got stifled with daggers. I quote it as giving some idea of the aspirations of the time. Let the reader remember that the French had found no way out of the long oppression under which they and their forefathers had lived save by insurrection; that they believed kingly luxury and tyranny to have been the causes of their misery and subjection; that the people had delivered themselves by the knife; that they had never seen any other means succeed; that the philosophers had all pleaded for them in vain; that they were firmly convinced that before kings arose equality, freedom, and means of subsistence were enjoyed by all who toiled; that everlasting emancipation from slavery and want depended upon themselves alone; and that one united, uncompromising, and thorough blow would redress for ever the wrongs of ages. Let the reader recall all this, and he is not English if his blood is not stirred by the—

#### BATTLE SONG OF THE CONSPIRATORS FOR EQUALITY.

By tyrant codes enthralled, by knaves borne down,  
 Man stoops to man, and villains wear the crown :—  
 Where is the freeman's voice ? the warrior's steel ?—  
 Shall we not stoutly fight, as well as keenly feel ?  
 Awake ! arise, at Liberty's command !—  
 Th' Aurora of our freedom is at hand—  
 And slavery's night is o'er if we'll but bravely stand !

Oh, Nature, or whatever power it be,  
 Which said to man, “*Be happy and be free !*”  
 Say by what strange mischance thy laws o'erthrown  
 Have yielded place to slavery and a throne.  
 Is there not *one* will dare assert the cause  
 Of outraged manhood and thy broken laws ?



How long shall man quail 'neath the despot rule  
Of a usurper or a king-born fool ?  
Nations ! arise, at Liberty's command !—  
Th' Aurora of your freedom is at hand !—  
And slavery's night is o'er if you'll but bravely stand !

In ancient times, when yet our race was young—  
Nor gold nor war the soul to madness stung—  
Each in the land possessed an equal share ;  
No kingly luxury known, no gaunt despair.  
Then peace and competence went hand in hand,  
Unfear'd the assassin's knife, the foeman's brand—  
These days are ours again if we'll but bravely stand !

In those bless'd days when man, of man the friend,  
Nor yet had learn'd to borrow or to lend,  
Nature on all alike her bounty poured ;  
No starving wretch was seen, no pampered lord—  
Till fraud and priestcraft, by ambition led,  
Taught man his kind to hate, his blood to shed ;  
Then princes, subjects, masters, serfs were known,  
And shuddering Freedom fled before—a THRONE !  
Nations ! arise, at Liberty's command !—  
Th' Aurora of your freedom is at hand—  
And slavery's night is o'er if you'll but bravely stand !

Where is the difference 'tween the serf and peer ?  
Why meanly quail ye, then, with idiot fear ?  
Bring front to front the oppressor and the oppressed ;  
Wealth cannot strength impart, nor title steel the breast.  
Lay on ! lay on ! the death-sigh of the brave  
Be ours, and not the death-bed of the slave !  
Nations ! arise, at Liberty's command !—  
Th' Aurora of your freedom is at hand—  
And slavery's night is o'er if you'll but bravely stand !

The only English account of this disastrous conspiracy is the translation of James Bronterre O'Brien, who rendered great service when boldness and historical knowledge were very important to the populace. He was one of the best-informed of the Chartist leaders. His translation and comments on Buonarroti's History are still cherished by a few surviving old Chartists. Traditions of the camp contributed to disqualify the French Liberals for seeking progress by reason. It is showier, swifter seeming, to fight out a difference than to reason men into the right. Reason is no doubt ineffective for a time with those who do not understand how to manage a weapon in the use of which they have not been drilled. Most of the peril and imprisonments in England which occurred in Chartist movements were occasioned by persons who had been in the army. They said, "What is the use of reasoning when you know you are in the right ? Why waste time in trying



to convince those who know they are in the wrong?" And while their plodding comrades were holding meetings, they were planning fights in the streets—declaring an hour's drill was worth a week of speeches.

Violence and spoliation are still charged against social improvers. Judge Thomas Hughes relates in his "Memoir of a Brother" how George Hughes said to him, "You, Tom, don't want to divide other people's property?" "No." "Then why call yourselves Socialists?" Tom answered, "It is only fools who believe or say that a desire to divide other people's property is the essence of Socialism." "That may be very true," answered his shrewd brother George, "but if you are called Socialists, you will never persuade English people that this is not your object" (pp. 113, 114).

Godwin's political justice was regarded, next to the works of Paine, as a text-book of working-class politicians. Published 1793, three years before Babeuf fell, it contained no sanction of his desperate methods. It advocated equality as broadly as Babeuf did; but Godwin added these warning words: "As the equality contemplated would be the result *not of force*, but of the serious and deliberate conviction of the public at large, it would be permanent." English partisans of equality declared themselves in favour of peace, industry, economy, and reason.

Its historic policy was that of progress by persuasion. Among our social innovators have been men who have cared nothing for political freedom. Many have come among them and have encouraged it, like Napoleon III., because they thought social ideas would beguile them out of political aspirations. The majority of them, however, have been men and women steadfastly caring for political improvement—not shrinking from sacrifice or peril when it came; but they put not change upon issues of violence.

Considérant gives an interesting account of the fabrication of Gruyère cheese in the Jura mountains: "The peasants rent a small house, consisting of a workshop and dairy, with a cellar. In the workshop they place an enormous copper, destined to receive the milk of two hundred cows. A single man suffices to make two or three cheeses of from sixty to eighty pounds weight. These cheeses are placed in a cellar to be salted and cured. Every day the quantity of milk

brought to the dairy is noted on two pieces of wood—one for the milker, the other for the manager. It is therefore known exactly how much each family contributes. They can even keep an account of the relative qualities of milk by means of an acrometer. They sell wholesale to the merchants. They deduct rent, fuel, and implements, pay the manager in proportion to the general result, and divide the rest among the families, proportionately to the value of their respective investments." It is clear that Gruyère should be the favourite cheese of co-operators, as it is the first cheese made on their system. If Protestants of historic taste take ox-tail soup (Huguenot soup) because the Huguenots taught us to make it, co-operators ought to eat Gruyère.

St. Simon, a member of an illustrious French family, born in Paris in 1760, was one of the world-makers. He served in several campaigns under Washington, but out of the ranks he proposed no violence, nor did any, except when he came to poverty and neglect he attempted to shoot himself. He, however, survived, regained his generous enthusiasm for human improvement, and prided himself on being the apostle of Industry—a worthy species of apostle who have come rather late in the world. He took no part in the destructive movement of the French Revolution, but spent nearly all his fortune in instituting "A Grand Establishment of Industry and a School of Scientific Perfection." In 1814 he published a scheme for the "Reorganisation of Europe." In 1817 (a notable year, as will appear in another chapter), with English social aspirants, St. Simon published his work on "Industry," upon the organisation of which he never ceased to write. "Industry," he declared, "was holy, for it serves to ameliorate the condition of the poor." His system was known by the formula—"To each according to his capacity : to each capacity according to its works"; which meant that the community would expect from each member the best he was able to do, and would reward him according to what he did. The followers of St. Simon acquired a grand way of speaking. "If Moses," they said, "had promised men universal fraternity, Jesus Christ had prepared it, St. Simon had realised it." His system attracted many noble minds in France. St. Simon himself shared the common fate of those who think for others more than for themselves,

and died poor and neglected in 1825. One disciple and two or three friends were with him when he expired, to whom his last exhortation was "Be of courage, and go forward constantly."

In 1832 St. Simonian missionaries came to London to call attention to their principles and plans. They described themselves as representing the holy religion of progress—a very good religion in its way, but it is one that never had many followers.

Charles Fourier was the next French dreamer of social worlds who attained great celebrity. He was born at Besançon, in 1772. He began his career in a way that gave no promise of the sublime schemes of passional harmony he was destined to amaze mankind with. His first literary effort was a poem on the death of a pastrycook, which astonished the professors of the college in which he was placed. He was hardly seven years old when tarts inspired his muse. Though of poetical temperament he was attached to business. His life was several times in danger during the fearful times of the Revolution. Notwithstanding that he was compelled to enter the army and serve six years, his gentle and kind disposition never changed. He believed the miseries of humanity to proceed from ignorance; and held that pain, either physical or moral, was the sign of error—pleasure the sign of truth. He issued in 1808 a statement of his views, under the title of "The Theory of the Four Movements." His ultimate work of most mark was "The New Industrial World"; but it was not until Victor Considérant became his disciple that his views began to allure cultivated minds. Fourier founded Phalansteres, and bewildered men more than St. Simon. His plans were as boundless as the visions of the "Arabian Nights"—his statement of them as dry as mathematical rigour could make them; his divisions and subdivisions were such that no Englishman could hope to master them and live. Never were such pomp and perplexity presented to working people before. If Fourier had had his way nobody would have known the earth again. If the disease of social reformers be world-making, Fourier may be said to have had it in a very violent form. We have had bad attacks of it in England, but nothing like what Frenchmen have suffered from. Fourier ends his work on the



future of man by the astounding remarks : "The duty of God is to compose a social code, and reveal it to man. . . . The duty of man is to search for the Divine code. . . . It is manifest that human reason has not fulfilled its task. This neglect has now been repaired, and the passional code discovered"—by Fourier. His last work, "*La Fausse Industrie*," was published in 1835. In 1837 he died, after the manner of his kind, sad and dejected at the non-realisation of his grand and gracious dreams.

These generous Utopianists put new ideas into the mind of the world. They made it possible for new men to do more. The careless verdict of the unregarding public was that they had all discovered perpetual motion, but none of them could get their machines to move. Before pioneers, for their encouragement, stand the dying words of St. Simon, "Be of courage, and go forward constantly."

1 "Social Destiny of Man."



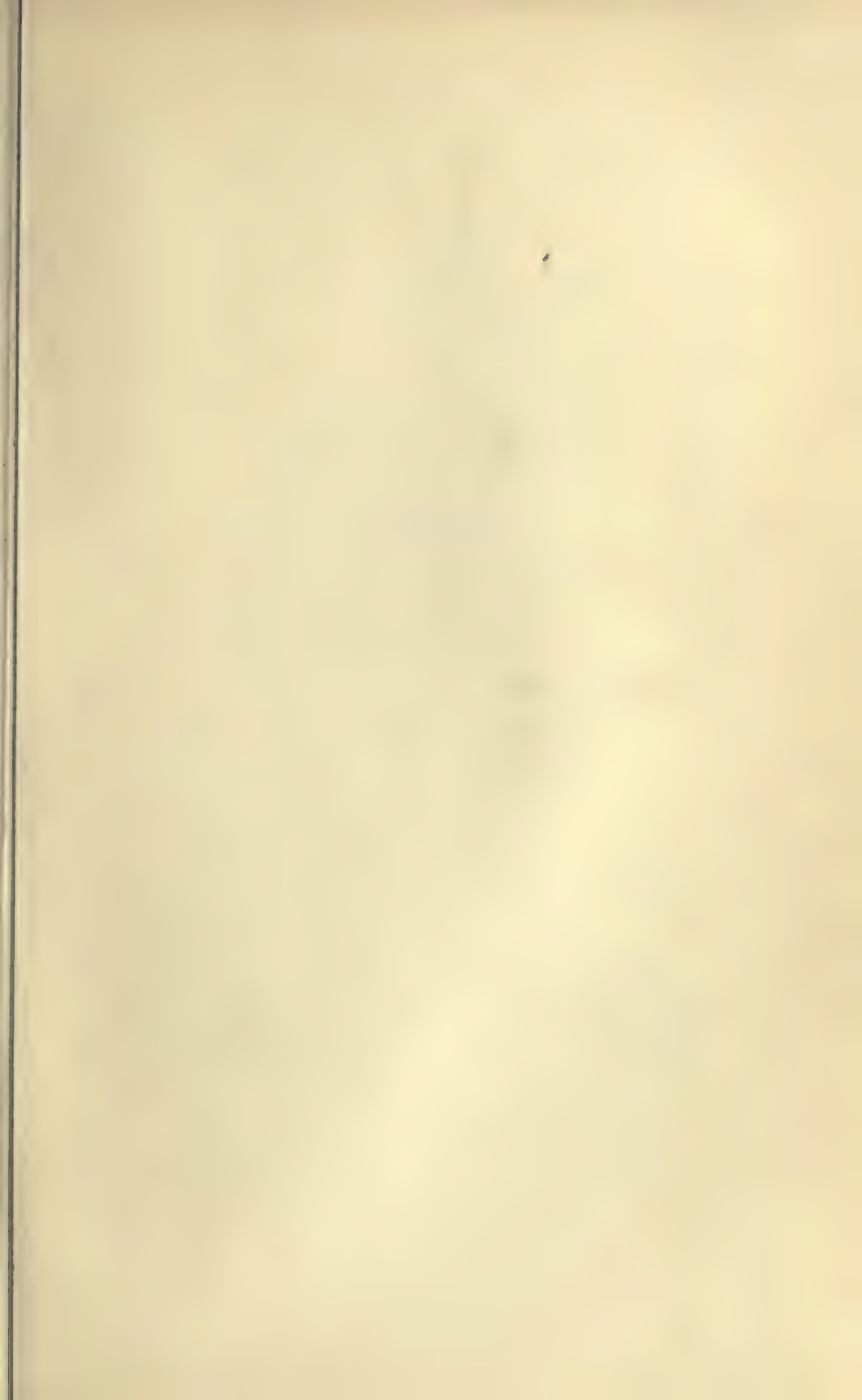
## CHAPTER IV

## HOW CO-OPERATION ITSELF BEGAN

"All around was dim,  
Yet his face glowed with light revealed to him."  
GEORGE ELIOT, *Jubal*.

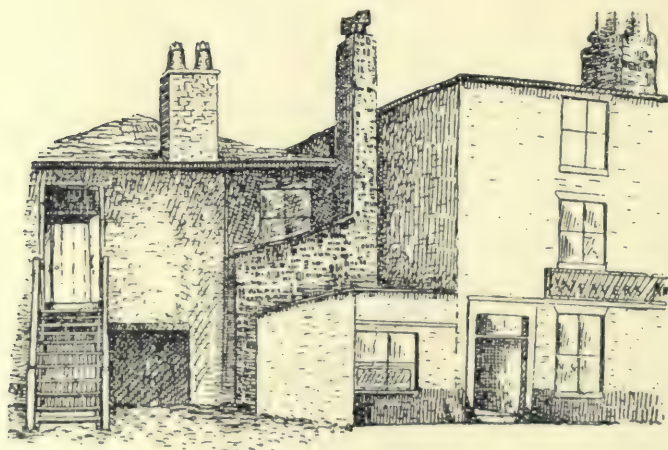
THE originator of Co-operation was Robert Owen, born so far back as 1771, a year before Fourier. Nature was in one of her adventurous moods at that period. In the four years from 1769 to 1772 there appeared Napoleon, Wellington, Goethe, Owen, and Fourier—all historic men in their line : bane and antidote, war and art, world-destroyers and world-makers. Robert Owen was born May 14, 1771, in Newtown, Montgomeryshire. He was afterwards known as Robert Owen, of New Lanark. Many will consider that he was not a proper person to be brought forward in legitimate history. But history is unceremonious. Its natural food is facts ; and when it gets them it has no choice, no scruples, and no remorse. In Mr. Owen's days few "proper persons" had the faculty of improvement in them of the kind that the world most wanted, and therefore a wilful Welshman took it into his benevolent and fertile head to do what he could. And thus it came about that Co-operation was a Welsh inspiration.

Mr. Owen was a very unusual man. By patience, industry, sagacity, and kindness he raised himself to eminence and opulence. His life illustrates how much knowledge a man of observation may acquire without books. He attained distinction by two things—the observance of truth in conduct and experience in practice. He was known from the first as a man of veracity and reflection. From being a draper's assistant he became a manager of cotton mills at Manchester. He had a large population of the working class under his direction in





THE ANTI CORN MILL, HULL.



THE SOCIALIST INSTITUTION, ROCHDALE.

[To face p. 33.]

Manchester, from 1791 to 1799, and a still larger number for many years afterwards at New Lanark, where, in 1810, he planned an Institution for the Formation of Character. He built commodious schoolrooms (one of them 90 feet by 40 feet) for the separate instruction from the time when as infants they were able to walk alone until they were intelligent. No school board with a town rate to aid it now would venture upon erecting premises so spacious for little children.<sup>1</sup> These proceedings being too far in advance for his partners, the building was suspended when the walls were half up. In 1814 he separated from these school-fearing colleagues, made arrangements for new partners, and purchased the whole establishment. Assent to his measures, for the improvement of the population and the finishing of the institution, were the conditions on which he accepted his new allies into partnership. The new institution was completed, fitted up, and furnished in the year 1815. On the first day of the following year, January, 1816, "The Institution" was formally opened, in the presence of all the villagers with their children. The assemblage exceeded two thousand in number. There were present also the principal nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood, with some of the clergy of various denominations. The parents present were astonished at being called upon to send their children to school the very next day. This was the first infant school ever established. Lord Brougham—then Henry Brougham—visited it twice. It was by Mr. Owen's aid in supplying them with teachers that Mr. Brougham, Mr. James Mill, and others were able to open the first infant school set up in England, in Brewer's Green, Westminster. The first little scholars met there on the 14th of February, 1819.<sup>2</sup> Mr.

<sup>1</sup> "Owen, like Plato, laid great stress on the value of singing, dancing, and drill, as means of education, much to the horror of his Quaker partners. Like Plato, he considered ease, graceful bearing, self-possession, and politeness principal tests and objects of any system of education. Where even now could you find such a school as the New Lanark, for rich or poor, setting up these qualities as among its main and principal objects?" (Lecture on "Foreshadowings of Co-operation in Plato," by Walter Morrison, M.P., Co-operative Institute, London, 1874.)

<sup>2</sup> This school failed. Not satisfied with the moral training and instructive amusement, as at New Lanark, the managers sought prematurely to develop the intellectual powers. The tender brain of the infant was over-excited; more harm than good was done; and the system fell, in a measure, into disrepute, until Fröbel, in his "Kindergartens," brought back things to a more rational way (R. D. Owen: Autobiography).



Owen was incessant in translating his theories into practice. It was in these skilfully-devised and long-continued arrangements for uniting intelligence with industry, and industry with working-class competence, that Co-operation was generated. Mr. Owen acted on the principle that intelligence would prove a good investment. It did prove so, and thus it came to pass that the education of members has always been deemed a part of the co-operative scheme among those who understood it.

Though Mr. Owen earned an honourable name for benevolence he was not a man who played at philanthropy. The working people in his employ were in ignorance, viciousness, and discomfort. Their great employer's object was to show them how much could be done by mutual arrangement to improve their condition and prospects. Mr. Owen's provisions in the attractions of the schoolroom, in the appliances for teaching, and the extent and quality of what was taught, have not been excelled in the most generous state in America, and it has never yet entered into the imagination of any English minister to offer, or of any workpeople to ask for such in Great Britain. The weavers and their wives at New Lanark who witnessed this more than princely concern for their children's welfare, knew that Mr. Owen meant them well, as was manifest also in a thousand acts of thoughtfulness and respectful treatment towards them. Had Mr. Owen lived in more appreciative days he had been offered a baronetcy. However, grateful workpeople offered him what he was prouder of, their confidence and co-operation, and their will and skill were new elements of profit in the workshop. Thus the foundations of Co-operation were laid by Mr. Owen and his associated capitalists by sharing with the labourers and their families a portion of the common gain. The share falling to the employers was greater than it otherwise could have been.

Mr. Owen, in his letter to the *Times* newspaper in 1834, addressing his early friend, who had then become Lord Chancellor Brougham, said: "I believe it is known to your lordship that in every point of view no experiment was ever so successful as the one I conducted at New Lanark, although it was commenced and continued in opposition to all the oldest and strongest prejudices of mankind. For twenty-nine years we did without the necessity for magistrates or lawyers;

without a single legal punishment ; without any known poors' rate ; without intemperance or religious animosities. We reduced the hours of labour, well educated all the children from infancy, greatly improved the condition of the adults, diminished their daily labour, paid interest on capital, and cleared upwards of £300,000 of profit."

Lord Brougham, in reply, stated in the *Times*, what he many years afterwards repeated in the House in Lords, that Mr. Owen was the originator of infant schools in England. Lord Brougham said : "I have not the least hesitation in stating that the infant school system never would, in all probability, have been established but for Mr. Owen's Lanark schools. I most distinctly recollect Mr. Mill (Mr. James Mill, father of John Stuart Mill, was the person referred to), Sir C. Grey (afterwards Chief Justice of Calcutta), and myself discussing for some weeks what name we should give these new schools, and . . . after rejecting various names, we fixed upon that of Infant Schools. The thing as well as the name were equally unknown till then in England." Mr. Owen added, in a further letter to the *Times*, that in 1799 he purchased the New Lanark mills for £60,000, and entered upon the premises on the 15th of August of that year ; that he published a very full and detailed account of the new institution, which included the infant schools, in his third essay on the "Formation of Character," and that a mutual friend of his and Lord Brougham (Mr. James Mill) corrected the press for him. It was candid in Mr. Owen to make this acknowledgment of the assistance of Mr. Mill.<sup>1</sup> The reader is conscious of vigour and directness of statement in those essays greater than other works of Mr. Owen's.

Owen instigated Fellenberg to commence an infant school at Hofwyl, which subsequently uniting industry with education became celebrated. The self-supporting Pauper Colonies of Holland were owing to Owen's suggestion. He originated the short-time agitation on behalf of children in factories ; he assisted Fulton with money to try his inventions in steam navigation ; he purchased the first bale of American Sea Island cotton imported into England, foreseeing at once the future

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Francis Place told me that he also was concerned in the revision of the Owen MS.

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importance to the spinning trade of England of encouraging the foreign supply of raw material. The great "Utopian" (as persons call him who, following the bent of their own faculties, believe nothing which is not commonplace) "had," his son Dale Owen states, "been received respectfully, and sometimes with distinction, by those highest in position : by Lords Liverpool, Sidmouth, Castlereagh, and by Mr. Canning ; by the Royal Dukes of York, Cumberland, Sussex, Cambridge, and especially by the Duke of Kent (Queen Victoria's father) ; by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Sutton), and by the Bishops of London, St. David's, Durham, Peterborough, and Norwich. Besides Bentham, his partner, he was more or less intimate with Godwin, Ricardo, Malthus, Bowring, Francis Place, Joseph Hume, James Mill, O'Connell, Roscoe, Clarkson, Cobbett, Sir Francis Burdett, the Edgeworths, the statistician Colquhoun, Wilberforce, Macaulay (father of the historian), and Nathan Rothschild, the founder of the house. He had received as guests at his own house at Braxfield, Princes John and Maximilian of Russia, the Duke of Holstein-Oldenburg, Baron Goldsmid, Baron Just (Saxon ambassador), Cuvier, Brougham, Sir James Mackintosh, and Lord Stowell, father-in-law of Lord Sidmouth. When he visited Paris he took letters from the Duke of Kent to the Duc d'Orleans (Louis Philippe), and from the French ambassador to the French minister ; and he was invited to the Visitor's Chair by the French Academy. In Europe he made the acquaintance of La Place, Humboldt, La Rochefoucauld, Camille Jourdain, Pastor Oberlin, Pestalozzi, Madame de Stael, and many other eminent persons." <sup>1</sup>

These illustrious intimacies show that Robert Owen carried co-operative industry into good company, for the discussion of this subject was the sole reason why eminent persons sought Mr. Owen, or he sought them.

The gains and economies of Lanark Mill had taught that the working class could, if they had sense to unite, make something by shopkeeping. One oven, Mr. Owen pointed out, might suffice to bake for one hundred families with little more cost and trouble of attendance than a single household took, and set free a hundred fires and a hundred domestic

<sup>1</sup> Robert Dale Owen, *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1873, pp. 735-6.



cooks. One commodious washhouse and laundry <sup>1</sup> would save one hundred disagreeable, screaming, steaming, toiling washing-days in common homes. It was not far to go to infer that one large well-stocked shop would, properly served, supply the wants of a thousand families, and supersede twenty smaller shops, and save to the customers all the cost of the twenty shopmen and twenty shop rents and rates, in addition to the economy in prices and advantage in quality in buying wholesale, in a degree small shops could not compass.

When Mr. Owen's plans for the reconstruction of society first dazzled the imaginations of men, hope begat belief that the day of great change was nigh. Many had a sense that society was ravel and cruelty, as far as competition went. But the formation of character was more arduous than was thought. Science has taught men that the improvement of mankind is an affair of a million influences and unknown time. None now can tell the fascination of that vision of improvement, in which progress was considered to be reduced to a simple problem of State mechanism, of which all the conditions had been discovered.

The tireless Newtown Utopian instituted a magnificent publicity of his projects. He made speeches, held meetings, published pamphlets and books, bought innumerable copies of all newspapers and periodicals which gave any account of his proceedings, and distributed them broadcast over the world. <sup>2</sup> The very day on which he opened his celebrated schools at New Lanark for the formation of character he dispatched to Lord Sidmouth the manuscript copy he had made of all he said, so that the Government might have the earliest and most authentic knowledge of what was going forward. Where a great co-operative society now spends pounds in diffusing a knowledge of its principles Mr. Owen spent thousands of pounds. It was this wise, costly, and generous publicity that led the public to attach value to the new social ideas. Mr. Owen may be said to have impressed mankind with them; for he travelled all over Europe and made repeated visits to

<sup>1</sup> These exist now. In Mr. Owen's days they were unknown and unthought of.

<sup>2</sup> He paid the full price for all newspapers he bought, and the price was considerable then; and he posted copies, among others, to every clergyman in the kingdom. Mr. Pare found that Mr. Owen's payments for papers amounted to £4,000 in three months.



America to personally spread the information of the new system of society. Simultaneously with his efforts in Europe he spent a fortune in America in endeavours to found communities there, but up to 1820 no periodical was started to advocate these views.

Things were so bad that few saw any hopes of amending them. The conclusion of most who thought upon the subject was that of the link-boy, who, when Pope, stumbling, cried out, "God mend me," answered, "I think, sir, God had better make a new one." Social reformers said it was better to make the stumbling world over again. In the *Economist* of that day, the first of the name, the editor, Mr. Mudie, was ready to undertake the task, and thus announced the resolution to which he had come :—

"Though far from entertaining a very exalted opinion of my own powers, yet from the mere conviction that the duty ought to be performed by some one, however humble, I have had the boldness *to take upon my shoulders the burden of examining the whole affairs and circumstances of mankind.* The ponderous load is greater than I could sustain, but that I feel a strength beyond my own. Would that I possessed the power to call around me on the instant the choicest spirits of the earth and the air,—that with a magic touch I could at once dissolve the delusions of error and of prejudice,—and, by the genii of the lamp and the ring, *transport* mankind in a moment into that new world of delights which is opening upon my enraptured sight."<sup>1</sup>

The British public, who walk by faith on Sundays, walk by sight only during week-days. In business they believe only according to results. Those who had resolved to make a clean sweep of existing institutions, found full employment for disciples of this thorough-going school, and a broom party of reformers was actually formed, who undertook to sweep error and cart it away.

"Social Science," now well recognised, was then an unknown term. Mr. Owen was the first public man to insist that there might be a "science of society."<sup>2</sup> His doctrine

<sup>1</sup> *Economist*, 1821.

<sup>2</sup> During a period of twenty years I well remember when the phrase "social science" was regarded as much an indication of "something being wrong" on the part of those who used it, as mentioning Sir C.

was that by the wise use of material means men might make society what it ought to be. In these happy and latitudinarian days anybody may improve society who can, and society is very glad when anybody gives signs of the capacity of doing it. His services are accepted, and no questions are asked. But in Robert Owen's days no one was allowed to attempt any good unless he believed in the Thirty-nine Articles,<sup>1</sup> and down to the year 1840 the Bishop of Exeter made things very unpleasant in the House of Lords to any persons detected doing it. Our "pastors and masters" held then the exclusive patent for improving the people, and though they made poor use of it, they took good care that nobody infringed it. Improvement, like the sale of corn, was a monopoly then, but we have free trade in humanity now, though the business done is not very great yet. The day at length came when the most ardent had to pause. The world did not subscribe, and it was left to chequeless enthusiasts to find funds to diffuse a knowledge of the new views. It was then that certain practical-minded persons advised the formation of co-operative stores, where money might be made without subscribing it, and proposed that shareholders should give their profits to a fund for propagandism.

The first journal in the interest of Co-operation was the *Economist* of 1821. It was thought in 1868 an act of temerity to take the name of *Social Economist* as a title.<sup>2</sup> The *Economist* was a title adopted by Mr. James Wilson, the founder of the *Economist* newspaper, who was likely to have seen Mr. Owen's publication, for there was much early knowledge of Co-operation in the house in Essex Street, where I used to see formidable files, reaching to the ceiling, of unsold *Economists*, before it became the organ of the commercial classes. The first number of the co-operative *Economist* appeared on Saturday, January 27, 1821, price threepence. It was preceded by

Lyell's doctrine of the Antiquity of Man, or Darwin's Theory of Evolution, afterwards became. We were all surprised when a National Association was formed for the promotion of "Social Science" in which prelates took part.

<sup>1</sup> This was as modestly put as could be expected by a prelate of that day. The Bishop of London said, "Mr. Owen's system was brought forward by an individual who declared that he was not of one of the religions hitherto taught. This alone was a sufficient reason for him to disregard it" (Hampden in the "Nineteenth Century," p. 47, 1834).

<sup>2</sup> *The Social Economist*, edited by the present writer and Mr. E. O. Greening.

a prospectus, as elaborate as an essay and as long as a pamphlet. The title-page of the volume declared that "*The Economist* was a periodical paper explanatory of the new system of society projected by Robert Owen, Esq., and a plan of association for the working classes." "Working people" was the better phrase Francis Place used in his addresses to them. In the very first number of this *Economist* mention was made of the formation of a "Co-operative and Economical Society," which is the earliest record I find of a name now so familiar to the public ear.

The public had been told that human affairs were henceforth to be based on some new principle. There was a general expectation that the public would soon hear of something to their advantage. At length one day in the autumn of 1821, the editor of the *Economist* broke in upon his readers in small capitals, and said to them :—

"THE SECRET IS OUT : it is unrestrained CO-OPERATION, on the part of ALL the members, for EVERY purpose of social life."<sup>1</sup> It was a very small, eager, active, manifold thing which appeared in the name of Co-operation, then for the first time distinctively named ; but during the next ten years it spread wondrously over the land.

In the middle of January, 1821, a pamphlet was published describing the Economical Society, at the Medallie Cabinet, 158, Strand, where the *Economist* itself was published. The pamphlet was signed by Robert Hunt, James Shallard, John Jones, George Hinde, Robert Dean, and Henry Hetherington. It professed to be a report of the committee appointed at a meeting of journeymen, chiefly painters, to take into consideration certain propositions, submitted to them by Mr. George Mudie, having for their object a system of social arrangement calculated to effect essential improvements in the condition of the working classes and of society at large. They took as a motto words from Milton, which were very appropriate to their purpose :—

"Our greatness will appear  
Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,  
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse  
We can create."

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<sup>1</sup> *Economist*, August 27, 1821.



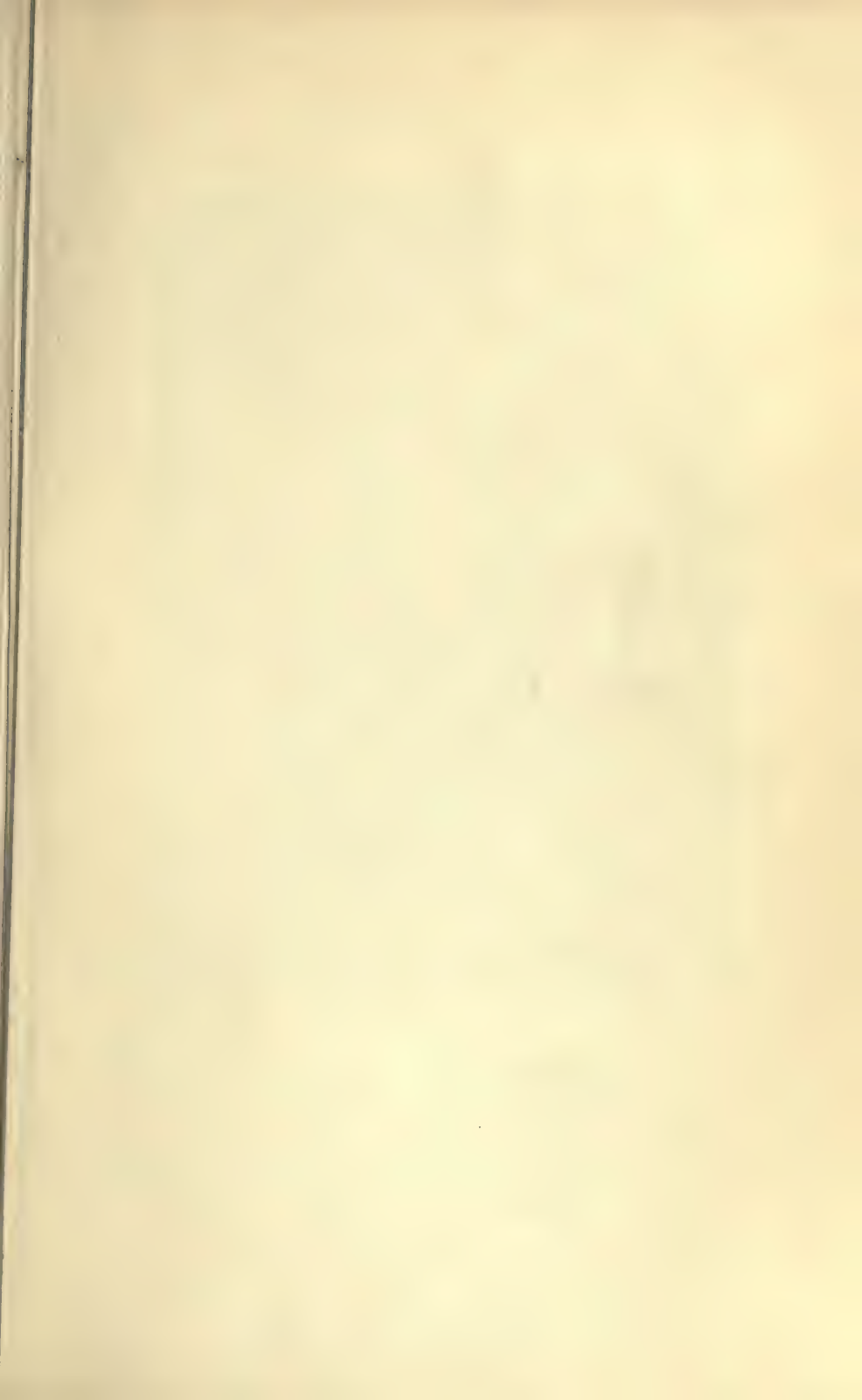
This is the first co-operative society motto I have found.

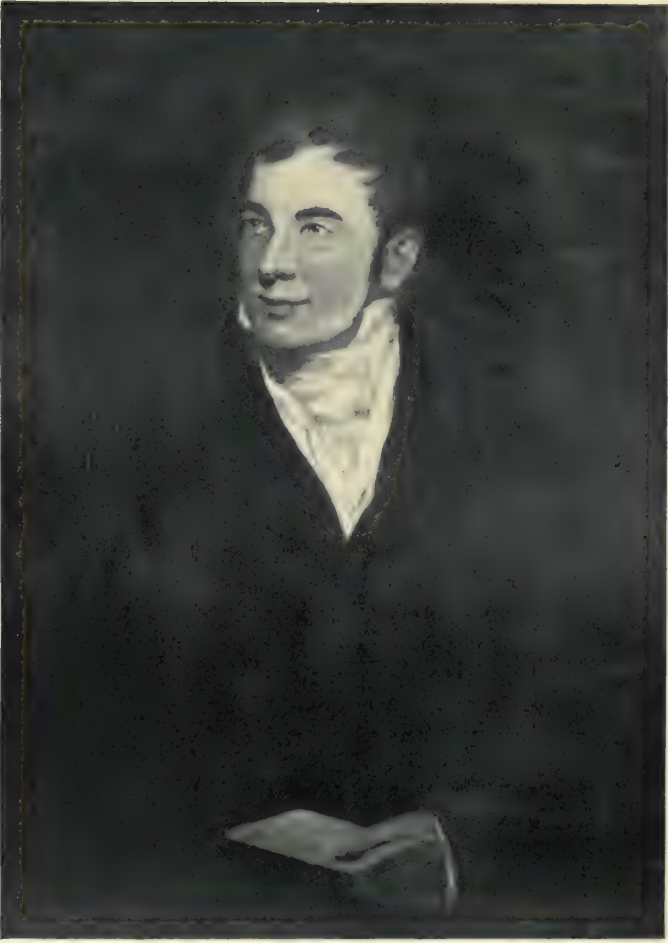
The term Co-operation was used in the sense of communism. From implying concert of life in community it came to mean concert in shopkeeping. It was a great descent from the imperial altitude of world-making to selling long-sixteen candles and retailing treacle. Doubtless, if we only knew it, the beginning of civilised society was not less absurd. There were in all probability dreamers who stood on the verge of savage life contemplating with satisfaction the future of civilisation, when men should abandon their reckless and murderous habits and master methods of thrift and peace. And when that new order began, now described as the dawn of civilisation, there must have been persons with a fine sense of contempt for those petty transactions of barter, out of which capital and commerce grew, which have finally covered the earth with palaces and raised private individuals to an opulence surpassing that of monarchs. Had there been leading articles, reviews, and political economists in those days, how these dreamers who brought about modern society would have been held up to derision and have been glad to hide their abashed heads!

Mr. Owen entertained the belief that "if the bad position of men's affairs proceed not from necessity but from errors, there is hope that when those errors are forsaken or corrected a great change for the better may ensue." "It is comparatively of little avail," Mr. Owen was accustomed to say, "to give to either young or old 'precept upon precept, and line upon line,' unless the means shall be also prepared to train them in good practical habits." These were the convictions which gave him strength and made him useful. When passing by the new Royal Exchange, London, he, looking up at it, said to a friend (Thomas Allsop) with him—"We shall have that one day. The old system must give way. It will come down of its own weight." The course of progress in this country is otherwise. Society does not come down. The originator of Co-operation never foresaw that a minor part of his views was destined to obtain a strange ascendancy. Who would have dreamed that flannel weavers, mechanics, and shoemakers of Rochdale, in 1844, were founding a movement the voice of which would pass like a cry of deliverance into



the camps of industry in many lands, and since cause shopkeepers in every town and city of the British Empire to scream with dread, cry to members of Parliament, and crowd the offices of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, praying to be rescued from the Red Sea of Co-operation, lest it should submerge their huxtering. But Co-operation is more merciful than the Egyptian waves, the Pharaohs of capital and competition will be saved, although they have brought—as co-operators contend—plagues of poverty upon the people. Co-operation, Mr. Owen no more constructed than George Stephenson did that railway system, which a thousand unforeseen exigencies have suggested and a thousand brains matured. But, as Stephenson made railway locomotion possible, so Owen set men's minds on the track of Co-operation, and time and need, faith and thought, have made it what it is.





Yours affectionately Robert Owen



## CHAPTER V

## THE CHARACTER OF ITS DISCOVERER

"There is a way of winning more by love than fear ;  
 Force works on servile nature—not the free :  
 He that's compelled to goodness may be good,  
 But 'tis but for that fit : where others, drawn  
 By softness and example, get a habit."—BEN JONSON.

THERE cannot be an adequate record of the co-operative movement without taking into account the influence of Mr. Owen's proceedings upon its fortunes. It was often involved in theological conflicts. Mr. Owen was the chief cause of this. He could not very well avoid giving battle to several kinds of adversaries, and, being a Welshman, I have no doubt he did it with good-will.

Robert Owen was the only Welshman I ever knew who did not think Wales the world, and he no sooner comprehended that there was a wider world elsewhere than he acted like one who had taken possession of it, and finding it in disorder, suggested how it might be put straight. He was the first publicist among us who looked with royal eyes upon children. He regarded grown persons as being proprietors of the world—bound to extend the rites of hospitality to all arrivals in it. He considered little children as little guests, to be welcomed with gentle courtesy and tenderness, to be offered knowledge and love, and charmed with song and flowers, so that they might be glad and proud that they had come into a world which gave them happiness, and only asked of them goodness. Duke Bernard, of Saxe-Weimar said, with admirable comprehensiveness, "Mr. Owen looked to nothing less than to renovate the world, to extirpate all evil, to banish all punishment, to create like views and like wants, and to

guard against all conflicts and hostilities." Finding pious benevolence seeking progress by prayer, which did not bring it, Mr. Owen boldly proposed to substitute for it scientific benevolence, which seeks human improvement by material methods. "Here," he said, if not in terms in theory, "is the new path of deliverance, where no thought is lost, no effort vain ; where the victory is always to the wise and the patient, and the poor who believe will no longer be betrayed." We know not now what courage it required to say this when Mr. Owen said it. Gentlemen expected to provide the poor with their religion. If they subscribed to any school this was their chief object, for very little secular learning was imparted. In Sunday schools spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic were subordinated to the Catechism. Mr. Owen gave lessons in the knowledge of the world in his schools. Both the clergy and dissenting ministers regarded with jealousy any influence not under their direction, and they made it difficult for social improvers to do anything.

To teach common people the arts of self-help, the wisdom of choosing their own opinions, and to believe only in that religion which brought them actual deliverance from dependence and want, was not a popular thing to do. Mr. Owen had the fate of Paine before him. Paine excelled all politicians in teaching principles. Ebenezer Elliott told me Paine was the greatest master of metaphor he had known. Cobbett's writings were vigorous wordiness, compared with Paine's finished thoroughness. The pen of Paine did as much as the sword of Washington to effect American independence. He was one whose writings Pitt thought it worth while to study. He was one of the founders of National Independence whom Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin consulted.

Owen, like Paine, for protesting against Theology as an obstruction to Humanity, suffered like penalty. From being the associate of the first men of his time, he had to appeal to working people to give effect to his views.

Mr. Owen was ready in public speech. Cambridge scholars, utterly prejudiced against him, were struck with the dignity of his bearing at the memorable meetings at the City or London Tavern in 1817. After a lapse of fifty-six years one of those present related that when Mr. Owen said, "all

the religions of the world were wrong," he thought him beyond the rank of common men. He seemed to this hearer to grow loftier in stature. The vast and various audience listened as men breathless. Then they broke out into tumultuous cheering at the courageous act of the speaker. Indeed, I modify the terms in which that day has been spoken of to me. Readers now would not understand the impression made; and for any purpose of persuasion it is useless to say more than will seem probable to those addressed. Mr. Owen's reputation for great wealth, the munificence of his known gifts, his personal sincerity, his high connections, the novelty of his views,—all lent elements of popular interest to what he said on subjects on which no gentleman, save he, ventured to say anything. He had made himself the first Captain of Industry. He had accomplished wonders never attempted before by any manufacturer. Statesmen from every part of Europe had been allured to New Lanark, and, for all any one knew, he might be able to demonstrate what no statesman had deemed it possible to compass.

The determination to make the formidable statement described, at that particular time, his son relates, was come to suddenly. Certain sectarian publications, seeing favourable notices in the *Times* of his proceedings at his first and second meeting in the London Tavern, began to call upon him to make a declaration of his views on religion, which up to that time he had withheld. Theological charges were made against him.<sup>1</sup> He had, however, maintained a proud reticence. As he enjoyed the personal respect of several eminent prelates—for the best educated are always the most tolerant—Mr. Owen could well afford to pass the lower sort by. As they were capable of doing harm, Mr. Owen, who was brave and not politic, defied them. It was the consciousness of this which helped to move the wonder and enthusiasm of the densely

<sup>1</sup> His son, Robert Dale, relates that he was with him during his examination by a committee of the House of Commons, when he gave evidence on the condition of the factory children, and heard Sir George Philips put questions to his father in an insolent tone as to his religious opinions. Brougham, who was also on the committee, resented this irrelevant offensiveness, and moved that the cross-examination in question be expunged from the record, and it was done. If, however, a gentleman's personal opinions could be attacked in a Parliamentary committee, the reader can imagine what took place elsewhere.



packed and excited audience, and of thousands outside trying in vain to obtain admission. "What, my friends," he began, "has hitherto retarded the advancement of your race to a high state of virtue and happiness? Who can answer that question? Who dares answer but with his life in his hand?—a ready and willing victim to the truth and to the emancipation of the world from its long bondage of error, crime, and misery. Behold that victim! On this day! in this hour! even now! shall those bonds be burst asunder, never more to reunite while the world lasts!"

This enthusiasm and pluck, moved the admiration alike of those who approved, and those who dissented, from this dangerous and impolitic speech. The consequences soon came home to him. He had friends too powerful for his life to be in danger; but those who could save his life could not save his influence. And in after years, at public meetings in the provinces, his life was often in jeopardy, and he was only saved by the intrepidity of working men, who protected him. The *Times* soon wheeled into line against him—the Conservative and influential classes deserted him. Only the Duke of Kent and Lord Brougham stood by him to the end.<sup>1</sup>

From being a social reformer he had commenced to be a religious reformer. An ominous meeting in the Rotunda of Dublin in 1823 was fatal to his new world. Society set its face against him, and the people were too poor to carry his ideas out. The father of Queen Victoria stood true. He said at one of Mr. Owen's meetings, two years after he had denounced all religions, "If I understand Mr. Owen's principles, they lead him not to interfere to the injury of any sect; but he claims for himself that which he is so desirous to obtain for his fellow-creatures—'religious liberty and freedom of conscience'; and these he contends for because his experience compels him to conclude that these principles are now necessary to secure the well-being and good order of society." This is excellently put, and is really what Mr. Owen meant. Being always a Theist, he was logically in error in denouncing "all religions." His province was to maintain, as the Duke of Kent puts it, "religious liberty and freedom of conscience."

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Autobiography of Robert Dale Owen.



In those alarmed days, when politicians and capitalists were as terrified as shopkeepers at Co-operation, Mr. Owen countenanced the discussion of a new question, which has strangely passed out of the sight of history. Mr. James Mill had written in the "*Encyclopædia Britannica*," as Malthus had done before, that it was both desirable and profitable to limit the families of the poor. Mill despised working people who crowded the labour market with their offspring, and then complained of the lowness of wages and the want in their homes. Certainly a man or woman supplicating a relieving officer, treated as a burden on the parish, and advised to emigrate, as the needy shopkeeper assessed for poor-rates is, compelled to begrudge the flesh on their bones—is a humiliating business, so shocking and deplorable that those who come to it had better never have been born. Any legitimate remedy which the wit of man could devise having this object would seem purity and dignity by the side of this degradation. Community-makers soon found that the inmates would come to certain ruin if the houses were overrun with children, and they listened to the Malthus and Mill warning. Mr. Owen, who always gave heed to the philosophers, took steps to give effect to their advice. No man had a better right than he to invent the maxim he was fond of using—"Truth without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man." He was not able to obtain truth free from error; but he was, beyond question, free from the fear of man.

This question concerned none save the poor, and he boldly counselled them against supplying offspring to be ground up alive in the mill of capital; or be cast aside when the labour market was glutted to fall into the hands of the constable or the parish overseer. The subject was regarded by the public then as the question of cremation was, which could never be mentioned in any periodical with tolerance. Cremation, to the surprise of everybody now—a question supposed to be innured with the ashes of Shelley—has become popular.

No notice of this curious episode in Mr. Owen's life occurs in the biographies of him which have appeared since his death. Mr. Sargant has brought together a variety of facts which it must have taken considerable research and cost to accumulate. Though Mr. Sargant's views are antagonistic, he never

calumniates, although he often fails to judge accurately; but as he is never dull, never indecisive, and often right in the opinion he forms, he is an instructive writer to those who incline to the side of the innovators.

Mr. Dale Owen might have given the world an incomparable life of his father, such as otherwise we are not likely to see. He had opportunities which no man, save he, possessed. For a period of half a century almost every man in Europe and America engaged in any forlorn hope of progress had communications at one time or the other with Mr. Robert Owen. Robert Dale published a work casting limited light on his father's career. His "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World" reads as though it were written by a man who had left this. He has apparently given us from scant notes twenty-seven years of autobiography in "Threading my Way," which, however, serves to show how curious and valuable a history of his father it would be in his power to write.

That I take to be the manliest reverence which praises within the limits of truth. The flatterer is either a knave who intends to impose upon you, or a patron who intends to befool you, or a coward who applauds because he has not the courage to condemn you, or a weak-eyed man who can only see one thing at a time. Those are wise who avoid the men who by wholesale praise hide from a man what he should be and keep him what he is. Prefer the man who blows hot and cold to him who blows all hot, because it is better to be invigorated than to be stifled. Believing so, I speak frankly as well as affectionately of Mr. Owen.

It is no part of my object to represent him other than he was. Though he was an amiable, he was, doubtless, at times a somewhat tiresome reformer. When he called a meeting together, those who attended never knew when they would separate. He was endowed with great natural capacity for understanding public affairs, and was accustomed to give practical and notable opinions upon questions quite apart from his own doctrines. His society was sought as that of a man who had the key of many State difficulties. Those know little of him who suppose that he owed his distinction to his riches. A man must be wise as well as wealthy to achieve the illustrious friendships which marked his career. He had

personally an air of natural nobility about him. He had, as the *Daily News* said, "an instinct to rule and command." In youth and middle age he must have been an actor on the political stage of no mean mark. He always spoke as "one having authority." He had a voice of great compass, thorough self-possession, and becoming action. Like many other men, he spoke much better than he wrote. When he was but twenty years of age he applied to Mr. Drinkwater for a responsible position. He was told "he was so young." "Yes," answered Mr. Owen, "that used to be said of me several years ago, but I did not expect to have it brought against me now." His boldness never deserted him. On one occasion William Johnson Fox, the famous preacher and anti-Corn Law orator, delivered a discourse in South Place Chapel on Mr. Owen's co-operative system. Some of his remarks being founded on a manifest misconception of it, Mr. Owen, who was present, rose before the final hymn was given out, and addressed the congregation in a speech of great dignity and propriety, and corrected the error of the orator. Though the proceeding was most unusual, and would only have been permitted in a place of worship where freedom of conscience was not only maintained but conceded, Mr. Owen acquitted himself so well that no one felt any sense of unseemliness in what he did.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Owen was an apostle, not a rhetorician. He never looked all round his statements (as Mr. Cobden did) to see where the ignorant might misconstrue them, or the enemy could come up and pervert them. He said "man was the creature of circumstances" for thirty years before he added the important words, "acting previous to and after his birth." He had the fatal ideas of the New Testament that equality was to be attained by granting to a community "all things in common" at the commencement. Whereas equality is the result, not the beginning. You must start with inequality and authority, steering steadily towards self-government and the accumulation of the common gains, until independence is secured to all. Mr. Owen looked upon men through the spectacles of his own good-nature. He seldom took Lord

<sup>1</sup> Mr. David Dale, who was a shrewd, discerning man, once said to Mr. Owen, "Thou needest to be very right, Robert, for thou art very positive."



Brougham's advice "to pick his men." He never acted on the maxim that the working class are as jealous of each other as the upper classes are of them. The resolution he displayed as a manufacturer he was wanting in as a founder of communities. Recognising his capacity as a manufacturer, even Allen, his eminent Quaker partner, wrote to him, "Robert Owen, thou makest a bargain in a masterly manner!" Sir John, then Dr. Bowring, said that the only time Jeremy Bentham ever made money was when he was a partner of Mr. Owen. No leader ever took so little care as Mr. Owen in guarding his own reputation. He scarcely protested when others attached his name to schemes which were not his. The failure of Queenwood was not chargeable to him. When his advice was not followed he would say: "Well, gentlemen, I tell you what you ought to do. You differ from me. Carry out your own plans. Experience will show you who is right." When the affair went wrong then it was ascribed to him. Whatever failed under his name the public inferred failed *through him*. Mr. Owen was a general who never provided himself with a rear guard. While he was fighting in the front ranks priests might come up and cut off his commissariat. His own troops fell into pits against which he had warned them. Yet he would write his next dispatch without it occurring to him to mention his own defeat, and he would return to his camp without missing his army. Yet society is not so well served that it need hesitate to forgive the omissions of its generous friends. To Mr. Owen will be accorded the distinction of being a philosopher who devoted himself to founding a Science of Social Improvement—a philanthropist who gave his fortune to advance it. Association, which was but casual before his day, he converted into a policy and taught it as an art. He substituted Co-operation for coercion in the conduct of industry—the willing co-operation of intelligence certain of its own reward, for sullen labour enforced by the necessity of subsistence, seldom to be relied on and never satisfied.

Southey, who was a competent judge of public men in his day, said: "I would class Owen in a triad as one of the three men who have in this generation given an impulse to the moral world, Clarkson and Dr. Bell are the other two.



They have seen the firstfruits of their harvest ; so, I think, would Owen ere this, if he had not alarmed the better part of the nation by proclaiming opinions upon the most momentous of all subjects. Yet I admire the man ; and readily admit that his charity is a better plank than the faith of an intolerant and bitter-minded bigot, who, as Warburton says, ‘counter-works his Creator, makes God after man’s image, and chooses the worst model he can find—himself.’” Mr. Owen had an accessible manner and a friendly face. There was a charm that those who approached him always found in his mind. Great or low, each felt assured, as the poet puts it—

“There can live no *hatred* in thine eye.”

The impression that Mr. Owen made upon workmen of his time is best described by one who won for himself a distinguished name as a working-class poet—Ebenezer Elliott. In an address to him, sent by trade-unionists of Sheffield in 1834, Elliott says : “You came among us as a rich man among the poor and did not call us a rabble. This is a phenomenon new to us. There was no sneer on your lips, no covert scorn in your tone.” That this distinction struck Elliott shows us how working men were then treated. It was in reply to this address that Mr. Owen made a remark which is an axiom in the best political Liberalism of these days. He said “Injustice is a great mistake.” He saw that it was not merely wrong, wicked, malevolent, hateful ; he believed that injustice did not answer in business—in fact, that it did not pay. This is becoming understood now. Here and there we may hear a wise employer say : “I cannot afford to pay my men badly.” There are co-operative productive societies which have not quite learned this yet. Indeed, it has taken a long time for employers to see that the workman, like the inanimate tools he uses, can only be efficient when made of good material, is of good temper, and kept in good condition.

A society in Sheffield, which has never been a sentimental place, bore the sentimental name of the “Sheffield Regeneration Society.” Mr. Owen was in favour of a rule of eight hours’ labour ; he being a very early advocate of what is now thought impossible. The Sheffield society did not believe that the world could be regenerated in eight hours, and addressed

Mr. Owen for an explanation. The document was written by Ebenezer Elliott, and was a good specimen of his prose style. It had this passage: "Dr. Chalmers, though he bids us die unmarried, does not really wish that the noble race of Watt and Burns, Locke and Milton, should become extinct. . . . William Cobbett, almost a great man, and once our only champion [a phrase he afterwards used in his famous epitaph on Cobbett<sup>1</sup>], seems to be mystifying himself and trying to mystify others on the all-important subject; but we do not call him either rogue or fool." Elliott ended by saying that the appropriate epitaph for the great communist's tomb—when he arrived at one—would be:—

"In the land of castes Owen was a Man."

When Mr. Owen first proposed to his partners to institute educational arrangements at their works he admitted that there might be loss. Bentham, Allen, and other of his partners resolved to run the risk, which in the end led to great fame and profit. When the partners who opposed the outlay retired the Lanark Mills were brought to the hammer. They depreciated the property, spreading about reports that Mr. Owen had ruined it, and that the business was not worth £40,000. They intended buying it themselves. But the philanthropist had an eye to business, and sent his solicitor to bid against them. The discontented partners bid in person, and actually bid themselves upwards of £110,000 for property they had declared worth £40,000 only. Mr. Owen bought it for £114,000. They knew that it was worth greatly more, and regretted all their days their folly and their loss. They had prematurely invited a large party of friends to a congratulation banquet on the day of the sale, and they had to play the part of hosts without appetite or exhilaration to guests unable to console them. When the news reached the Lanark workmen that Mr. Owen was to be their future

<sup>1</sup> The reader may see that Elliott, when he came to write his epitaph on Cobbett, must have recurred to this address. It was this:—

"Our friend, when other friend we'd none;  
Our champion, when we had but one;  
Cursed by all knaves, beneath this sod  
Bill Cobbett lies—a *Man* by God."

master the place was illuminated. When Mr. Owen and his new partners went down the workpeople and inhabitants for miles round went out to greet them with music. The horses were ungeared and, amid the acclamations of thousands, they were drawn in triumph into the town. Mr. Owen's Quaker partners with him were astounded. Never before were followers of George Fox sharers in such a demonstration. And few have been the employers who have been welcomed back by their workpeople as Mr. Owen was. These facts have had great influence in making employers genial and considerate to persons in their mills, though none have equalled the great founder of the system. These facts are worth remembering by the new co-operative companies continually forming, animated by the common notion that niggardliness is economy and that shabbiness can bring satisfaction.

Wesleyanism dotted the country with prayer-meetings—Chartism covered it with conspiring groups of worldly-awakened men—Socialism sought to teach industry power, property its duty, and the working people how to struggle for their improvement without anger or impatience. It was Mr. Owen who was conspicuous in teaching them the golden lesson of peace and progress. His heart was with that religion which, though weak in creeds and collects, rendered humanity service. No affluence corrupted him. When he saw gentlemen of his acquaintance adding thousands to thousands and acre to acre, and giving themselves up to the pride of family, of title, of position, he himself plotted for the welfare of mechanics and labourers. He found no satisfaction in the splendour of courts so long as the hovel stood in sight. He felt as Mr. Bright did who had a mightier power of expressing the great aims which raise the stature of mankind, who said: "I do not care for military greatness or renown: I care for the condition of the people among whom I live. . . . Crown, coronet, mitres, military displays, pomp of war, wide colonies, and a huge empire are in my view all trifles light as air, unless with them you can have a fair share of comfort, contentment, and happiness among the great body of the people."



## CHAPTER VI

## HIS APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE

"There are some very earnest and benevolent persons who have nevertheless a hollow jingle in their goodness. They mistake their own indifference for impartiality, and call upon men to renounce for philanthropic purposes convictions which are as sincere, as salutary, and often more important to public freedom than philanthropy itself."  
—G. J. H.

It was the year 1825 which saw co-operative views—which since 1812 had been addressed by Mr. Owen to the upper classes—first taken up by the working class. In 1817, as the reader has already seen, he declared "all the religions of the world to be founded in error"; he alarmed the bishops and clergy, many of whom were in sympathy with his views, and had themselves intermittent compassion for the working class. For twenty-three years their wrath endured. In 1840 Mr. William Pare, one of the earliest and ablest of Mr. Owen's disciples, was compelled to resign the office he held of Registrar of births, deaths, and marriages in Birmingham, in consequence of its being made known to the Bishop of Exeter that Mr. Pare sympathised with Mr. Owen's views.

Many of Mr. Owen's difficulties with theologians arose through their not understanding him, and through Mr. Owen not understanding that they did not understand him. His followers were fond of quoting the lines:—

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,  
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

It is not at all clear that a man has a fair chance of getting

his life right while his creed is wrong. With all men creed has a great deal to do with conduct. Pope's lines are the doctrine of a latitudinarian without a conscience. But the argument of Pope imposed on Mr. Owen, as it has done on other excellent men. Mr. Owen was not himself indifferent to conviction. His own conviction about the religion of humanity was so strong that he paid no heed to any opinions which contradicted it. An innovator may point out the errors and mischiefs of a popular faith; but he can never command respect from adversaries unless he makes himself master of their case and does justice to the equal honesty of those sincerely opposed to him. Meaning nothing offensive by it, Owen often displayed the common insolence of philosophers—the insolence of pity. It is irritating and un instructive to earnest men to be looked down upon with compassion on account of convictions acquired with anxiety and many sacrifices.

"It is not our object," at other times Owen used to say, "to attack that which is false, but to make clear that which is true. Explaining that which is true convinces the judgment when the mind possesses full and deliberate powers of judging." The creed of Co-operation was that the people should mean well, work well, secure to themselves the results of their labour, and neither beg, nor borrow, nor steal, nor annoy. Owen inconsistently denied men's responsibility for their belief, and then said the new system did not contravene religion. As religion was then understood it did.

In 1837 Mr. Owen, in his discussion with the Rev. J. H. Roebuck, at Manchester, said "he was compelled to believe that all the religions of the world were so many geographical insanities." It was foolishness in followers to represent, as did John Finch and Minter Morgan, that their views were those of "true Christianity." Their business was simply to contend that their views were morally true, and relevant to the needs of the day, and rest there. Neither to attack Christianity nor weakly attempt to reconcile social views to it would have been a self-defensive and self-respecting policy.

Mr. Owen's theory of the motives or conduct was one which could only commend itself to persons of considerable independence of thought—who were then a small minority.

To incite men to action he relied on four considerations, namely, that what he proposed was :—

1. True ; 2. Right ; 3. Humane ; 4. Useful.

It was understood very early<sup>1</sup> that Co-operation was proposed as a system of universal industry, equality of privileges, and the equal distribution of the new wealth created. This was an alarming programme to most persons, except the poor. Many did not like the prospects of “universal industry.” The “distribution of wealth” in any sense did not at all meet the views of others, and “equality of privilege” was less valued.

Mr. Owen determined upon committing his schemes to the hands of the people, for whom he always cared, and sought to serve. Yet, politically, he was not well fitted to succeed with them. Cobden said Lord Palmerston had no prejudices—not even in favour of the truth. Mr. Owen had no political principles—not even in favour of liberty. His doctrine was that of the poet :—

“For modes of government let fools contest,  
That which is best administered is best”

—a doctrine which has no other ideal than that of a benevolent despotism, and has no regard for the individual life and self-government of the people. Mr. Owen was no conscious agent of the adversaries of political rights. He simply did not think rights of any great consequence one way or the other. There never was any question among Liberal politicians as to the personal sincerity of Mr. Owen. Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, Francis Place were his personal friends, who were both social and political reformers, and valued Mr. Owen greatly in his own department, which was social alone.<sup>2</sup>

The French social reformers, from Fourier to Comte, have held the same treacherous tone with regard to political freedom. Albert Brisbane, who published the “Social Destiny of Man,”

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative Miscellany*, No. 2, 1830.

<sup>2</sup> In his account of the Shakers in the *Economist* of June 2, 1821, Mr. Mudie said, “They never meddle with public affairs—not even voting at an election,” and described as “a few singularities” this base abandonment of the country to whomsoever might bestride it—to patriots who might care for it, or knaves who might despoil it of honour or freedom, while the unheeding Shakers took care of their petty conscience and comfort.



himself a determined Fourierite, announced on his title-page, "Our evils are social not political"—giving a clean bill of health to all the knaves who by political machination diverted or appropriated the resources of the people. "Our most enlightened men," he contemptuously wrote, "are seeking in paltry political measures and administrative reforms for means of doing away with social misery." Tamisier more wisely wrote when he said, "Political order has alone been the object of study, while the industrial order has been neglected." Because social life had been neglected for politics, it did not follow that political life was to be neglected for social. This was merely reaction, not sense.

Another dangerous distich then popular with social reformers was the well-known lines Tory Dr. Johnson put into a poem of Goldsmith :—

"How small of all that human hearts endure  
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure."

Goldsmith knew nothing of political science. The cultivated, generous-hearted, sentimental piper was great in his way. He foresaw not England made lean and hungry by corn laws; or Ireland depopulated by iniquitous laws; or France enervated and cast into the dust by despotism; but social reformers of Mr. Owen's day had means of knowing better. It was not their ignorance so much as their ardour that misled them. The inspiration of a new and neglected subject was upon them, and they thought it destined to absorb and supersede every other. The error cost them the confidence of the best men of thought and action around them for many years.

Mr. Owen's own account of the way in which he sought to enlist the sympathies of the Tories of his time with his schemes is instructive. They were, as despotic rulers always are, ready to occupy the people with social ideas, in the hope that they will leave political affairs to them. How little the Conservatives were likely to give effect to views of sound education for the people, irrespective of religious or political opinion, we of to-day know very well.

"I have," says Mr. Owen, "attempted two decisive measures for the general improvement of the population.

The one was a good and liberal education for all the poor, without exception on account of their religious or political principles; to be conducted under a board of sixteen commissioners, to be chosen by Parliament, eight to be of the Church of England and the remainder from the other sects, in proportion to their numbers, the education to be useful and liberal. This measure was supported, and greatly desired, by the members of Lord Liverpool's administration; and considerable progress was made in the preliminary measures previous to its being brought into Parliament. It was very generally supported by leading members of the aristocracy. It was opposed, however, and, after some deliberation, stopped in its progress by Dr. Randolph, Bishop of London, and by Mr. Whitbread. But the Archbishop of Canterbury, and several other dignitaries of the Church, were favourable to it. The declared opposition, however, of the Bishop of London and of Mr. Whitbread, who it was expected would prevail upon his party to oppose the measure, induced Lord Liverpool and his friends—who, I believe, sincerely wished to give the people a useful and liberal education—to defer the subject to a more favourable opportunity.

“The next measure was to promote the amelioration of the condition of the productive classes by the adoption of superior arrangements to instruct and employ them. I had several interviews with Lord Liverpool, Mr. Canning, and other members of the Government, to explain to them the outlines of the practical measures which I proposed. They referred the examination of the more detailed measures to Lord Sidmouth, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and I had many interviews and communications with him upon these subjects.

“I became satisfied that if they had possessed sufficient power over public opinion they would have adopted measures to prevent the population from experiencing poverty and misery; but they were opposed by the then powerful party of the political economists.

“The principles which I have long advocated were submitted for their consideration, and at their request they were at first printed but not published. They were sent, by the permission of the Government, to all the Governments of

Europe and America ; and upon examination by statesmen and learned men of the Continent were found to contain no evil, but simple facts and legitimate deductions. In one of my last interviews with Lord Sidmouth, he said : ' Mr. Owen, I am authorised by the Government to state to you that we admit the principles you advocate to be true, and that if they were fairly applied to practice they would be most beneficial ; but we find the public do not yet understand them, and they are therefore not prepared to act upon them. When public opinion shall be sufficiently enlightened to comprehend and to act upon them we shall be ready and willing to acknowledge their truth and to act in conformity with them. We know we are acting upon erroneous principles ; but we are compelled to do so from the force of public opinion, which is so strongly in favour of old-established political institutions.' To a statement so candid I could only reply, ' Then it becomes my duty to endeavour to enlighten the people and to create a new public opinion.'"<sup>1</sup> If Lord Sidmouth believed what he said, in the sense in which Mr. Owen understood him, he dexterously concealed, in all his public acts and speeches, his convictions from the world.

It was happily no easy thing even for Mr. Owen to win the confidence of the working-class politicians. They honourably refused to barter freedom for comfort, much as they needed an increase of physical benefits. We had lately a curiously-devised Social and Conservative Confederation, the work of Mr. Scott-Russell, in which the great leaders of the party always opposed to political amelioration were to lead the working class to the attainment of great social advantages, and put them "out in the open," as Sir John Packington said, in some wonderful way. Several well-known working-class leaders, some of whom did not understand what political conviction implied, and others who believed they could accept this advance without political compromise, entered into it. There were others, as Robert Applegarth, who felt that it was futile to put their trust in political adversaries to carry out their social schemes and then vote against them at elections, and so deprive their chosen friends of the power of serving them. Twelve

<sup>1</sup> *British Co-operator*, p. 154.



names of noblemen, the chief Conservatives in office, were given as ready to act as the leaders of the new party. Mr. Robert Applegarth caused the names to be published, when every one of them wrote to the papers, denying any authority for connecting them with the project.

Mr. Owen's early followers were looked upon with distrust by the Radical party, although he numbered among his active disciples invincible adherents of that school; but they saw in Mr. Owen's views a means of realising social benefits in which they, though Radicals, were also interested. Mr. Owen looked on Radicals and Conservatives alike as instruments of realising his views. He appealed to both parties in Parliament with the same confidence to place their names upon his committee. He went one day with Mrs. Fry to see the prisoners in Newgate. The boys were mustered at Mrs. Fry's request for his inspection. Mr. Owen published in the newspapers what he thought of the sight he beheld. He exclaimed: "A collection of boys and youths, with scarcely the appearance of human beings in their countenances; the most evident sign that the Government to which they belong had not performed any part of its duty towards them. For instance: there was one boy, only sixteen years of age, double ironed! Here a great crime had been committed and a severe punishment is inflicted, which under a system of proper training and prevention would not have taken place. My Lord Sidmouth will forgive me, for he knows I intend no personal offence. His dispositions are known to be mild and amiable<sup>1</sup>; but the chief civil magistrate of the country, in such case, is far more guilty than the boy; and in strict justice, if a system of coercion and punishment be rational and necessary, he ought rather to have been double ironed and in the place of the juvenile prisoner."

When Mr. Owen applied personally to Lord Liverpool, then Prime Minister, for permission to place his name with the leading names of members of the Opposition, to investigate his communistic plans, Lord Liverpool answered: "Mr. Owen, you have liberty to do so. You may make use of our names in any way you choose for the objects you have in view, short of committing us as an administration." The

<sup>1</sup> Had this been true, his name would not have been hateful to this day.

next day Mr. Owen held a public meeting. "I proposed," Mr. Owen has related, "that these important subjects should be submitted for consideration to the leading members of the administration and of the Opposition; and for several hours it was the evident wish of three-fourths of the meeting that this question should be carried in the affirmative. But as it was supposed by the Radical reformers of that day that I was acting for and with the ministry, they collected all their strength to oppose my measures; and finding they were greatly in the minority, they determined to prolong the meeting by opposing speeches, until the patience of the friends of the measure should be worn out. Accordingly, the late Major Cartwright, Mr. Alderman Waithman, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Hone, and others, spoke against time, until the principal parties retired, and until my misguided opponents could bring up their numerous supporters among the working classes, who were expected to arrive after they had finished their daily occupations; and at a late hour in the day the room became occupied by many of the friends and supporters of those gentlemen, who well knew how to obtain their object at public meetings by throwing it into confusion."<sup>1</sup> The wonderful committee Mr. Owen proposed comprised all the chief public men of the day, who never had acted together on any question, and unless the millennium had really arrived—of which there was no evidence before the meeting—it was not likely that they would. This was the resolution submitted to the meeting: "That the following noblemen and gentlemen be appointed on the committee, with power to add to their number:—

The First Lord of the Treasury.  
 The Lord Chancellor.  
 Sir Robert Peel, the Secretary of State.  
 Sir George Murray.  
 Sir Henry Hardinge.  
 The Chancellor of the Exchequer.  
 The Attorney and Solicitor General.  
 The Master of the Mint.  
 The Secretary of War.  
 The President of the Board of Trade.  
 The First Lord of the Admiralty.

The Duke of Sussex.  
 The Duke of Richmond.  
 The Earl of Winchelsea.  
 The Earl of Harewood.  
 The Marquis of Lansdowne.  
 Lords Grosvenor and Holland.  
 Lord Eldon.  
 Lord Sidmouth.  
 Lord Radnor.  
 Lord Carnarvon. [York.  
 The Archbishops of Canterbury and  
 The Bishops of London and Peterborough.

<sup>1</sup> *British Co-operator*, p. 152.

Deans of Westminster and York.  
 Cardinal Wild and Dr. Croly.  
 William Allen and Joseph Foster.  
 Mr. Rothschild and Mr. J. L. Gold-  
 smid.  
 Lord Althorp.  
 Mr. Brougham.  
 Sir J. Graham.  
 Sir Henry Parnell.  
 Mr. Spring Rice.  
 Lord John Russell.  
 Sir John Newport.  
 Sir James Mackintosh.  
 Mr. Denman.  
 Mr. Alexander Baring.  
 Mr. Hume.

Mr. O'Connell.  
 Mr. Charles Grant.  
 Mr. Wilmot Horton.  
 Mr. Huskisson.  
 Lord Palmerston.  
 Mr. J. Smith.  
 Lord Nugent.  
 The Hon. G. Stanley.  
 Lord Milton.  
 Sir R. English.  
 Sir Francis Burdett.  
 Mr. William Smith.  
 Mr. Warburton.  
 Mr. Hobhouse.  
 Dr. Birkbeck.  
 Mr. Owen."

There was this merit belonging to the proposal, that such an amazing committee was never thought possible by any other human being than Mr. Owen. Ministers were to forsake the Cabinet Councils, prelates the Church, judges the courts; the business of army, navy, and Parliament was to be suspended, while men who did not know each other, and who not only had no principles in common, but did not want to have, sat down with heretics, revolutionists, and Quakers, to confer as to the adoption of a system by which they were all to be superseded. It was quite needless in Major Cartwright and Alderman Waithman to oppose the mad motion, such a committee would never have met.

Mr. Owen was never diverted, but went on with his appeal to the people. He had the distinction of being the gentleman of his time who had earned great wealth by his own industry, and yet spent it without stint in the service of the public. It is amusing to see the reverence with which the sons of equality regarded him because he was rich. His name was printed in publications with all the distinction of italics and capitals as the *Great Philanthropist* OWEN; and there are disciples of his who long regarded the greatness of Co-operation as a tame, timid, and lingering introduction to the system of the great master whom they still cite as a sort of sacred name. It was a very subdued way of speaking of him to find him described as the "Benevolent Founder of our Social Views."

Long years after he had "retired from public life" his activity far exceeded that of most people who were in it, as a few dates of Mr. Owen's movements will show. On



July 10, 1838, he left London for Wisbech. On the three next nights he lectured in Lynn, the two following nights in Peterborough. On the next night at Wisbech again. The next night he was again in Peterborough, where, after a late discussion, he left at midnight with Mr. James Hill, the editor of the *Star in the East*, in an open carriage, which did not arrive at Wisbech till half-past two. He was up before five o'clock the same morning, left before six for Lynn, to catch the coach for Norwich at eight. After seeing deputations from Yarmouth he lectured in St. Andrew's Hall at night and the following night, and lectured five nights more in succession at March, Wisbech, and Boston. It was his activity and his ready expenditure which gave ascendancy to the social agitation, both in England and America, from 1820 to 1844.

Robert Owen died in his 88th year, on the 17th of November, 1858, at Newtown, Montgomeryshire—the place of his birth. His wish was to die in the house and in the bedroom in which he was born. But Mr. David Thomas, the occupant of the house, was unable so to arrange. Mr. Owen went to the Bear's Head Hotel, quite near, and since rebuilt. He was buried in the grave of his father in the spacious ground of the Church of St. Mary. Mr. David Thomas and Mr. James Digby walked at the head of the bearers. The mourners were :—

Mr. George Owen Davies.  
Mr. William Cox.  
Mr. W. H. Ashurst.  
Mr. Edward Truelove.  
Mr. Francis Pears.  
Mr. William Jones.  
Mr. George Goodwin.

Mr. Robert Dale Owen.  
Mr. William Pare.  
Col. H. Clinton.  
Mr. G. J. Holyoake.  
Mr. Robert Cooper.  
Mr. Law.  
Mr. Pryce Jones.

There was quite an honouring procession—the Rev. John Edwards, M.A., who read the burial service, medical gentlemen, magistrates, Mr. Owen's literary executors, deputations of three local societies, and, very appropriately, twelve infant school children—seeing that Mr. Owen was the founder of infant schools.

After the funeral, Mr. Robert Dale Owen came into the hall of the "Bear's Head" with a parting gift to me of the Life

of his father, in which he had inscribed his name and mine. While paying my account at the office window, I placed them on a table near me, but on turning to enter the London coach with other visitors I found the books were gone. Though I at once made known my loss, nothing more was heard of them until forty-four years later, July 24, 1902,<sup>1</sup> when a large delegation of co-operators from England and Scotland assembled to witness the unveiling of the handsome screen erected by them, to surround the tomb of Mr. Owen, on which occasion I delivered the following address :—

We come *not* "to bury Cæsar"—but to praise him. It is now recorded in historic pages that "Robert Owen was the most conspicuous figure in the early part of the last century."<sup>2</sup> We are here at the commencement of another century to make the *first* commemoration that national gratitude has accorded him.

Being the last of the "Social Missionaries" appointed in 1841 to advocate Mr. Owen's famous "New Views of Society," and being the only survivor of his disciples who, forty-four years ago, laid his honoured bones in the grave before us, the distinction has been accorded to me of unveiling this Memorial. As the contemporaries of a public man are the best witnesses of his influence, or his eminence, we may recall that Southey described him as "one of the three great moral forces" of his day. There is a rarity in that praise, for there are still a hundred men of force to one of "moral" force.

Do we meet here to crown the career of a man unremarkable in the kingdom of thought, or without the genius of success? It is for us to answer these questions. It is said by parrot-minded critics that Owen was "a man of *one* idea," whereas he was a man of more ideas than any public man England knew in his day. He shared and befriended every new conception of moment and promise, in science, in education, and government. His mind was hospitable to all projects

<sup>1</sup> The mistress of a shop in Newtown where pledges were taken in, hearing my name among the arrivals, and remembering she had seen it on the title-page of a book in her possession, kindly sent me word that she would have pleasure in restoring it to me, which she did.

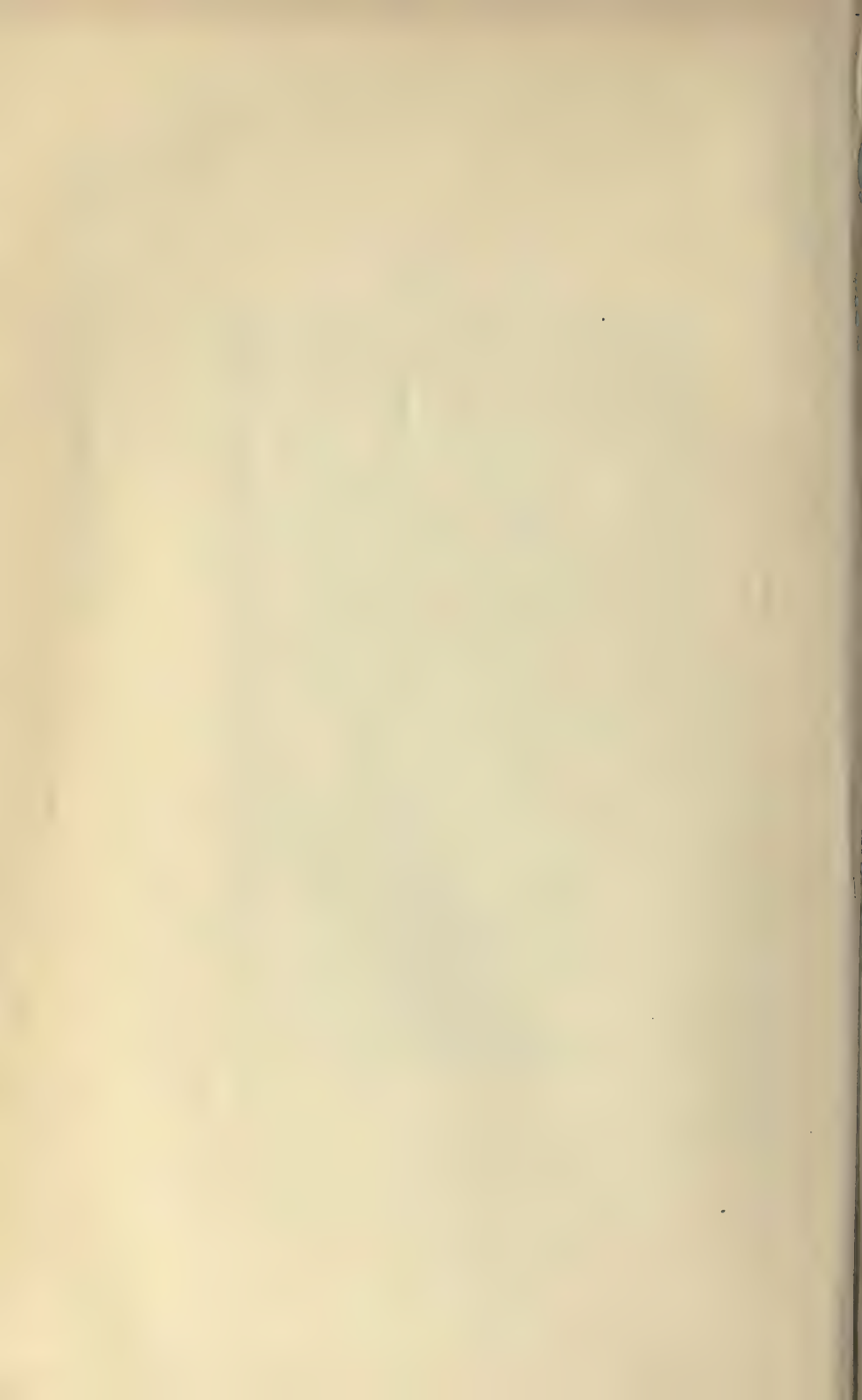
<sup>2</sup> "Robert Owen," by Leslie Stephen, *Nat. Dict. Biog.*



THE OWEN MEMORIAL AT NEWTOWN.

Completed by Mr. HARRISON, July 18th, 1888.





of progress ; and he himself contributed more original ideas for the conduct of public affairs than any other thinker of his generation. It was not the opulence of his philanthropy, but the versatility of his ideas and interests, which led members of our Royal Family to preside at public meetings for him, brought monarchs to his table, and gave him the friendship of statesmen, of men of science and philosophy, throughout Europe and America. No other man ever knew so many contemporaries of renown.

Because some of his projects were so far reaching that they required a century to mature them, onlookers who expected them to be perfected at once, say he "failed in whatever he proposed." While the truth is he succeeded in more things than any other man ever undertook. If he made more promises than he fulfilled, he fulfilled more than any other public man ever made. Thus, he was not a man of "one idea" but of many. Nor did his projects fail. The only social community for which he was responsible was that of New Harmony, in Indiana ; which broke up through his too great trust in uneducated humanity—a fault which only the generous commit. The communities of Motherwell and Orbiston, of Manea, Fen, and Queenwood in Hampshire were all undertaken without his authority, and despite his warning of the inadequacy of the means for success. They failed, as he predicted they would. Critics, skilled in coming to conclusions without knowing the facts, impute these failures to him.

The Labour Exchange was not Mr. Owen's idea, but he adopted it, and by doing so made it so successful that it was killed by the cupidity of those who coveted its profits. He maintained—when nobody believed it—that employers who did most for the welfare of their workpeople, would be the greatest gainers. Owen did so, and made a fortune by it. Was not that success ?

A co-operative store was a mere detail of his factory management. Now they overrun the world. Have they not succeeded ? We Co-operators can answer for that.

He bought and worked up the first bale of cotton imported into England, thus practically founding the foreign cotton trade. Will any one say that has not answered ?

He was the first to advocate that eight hours a day in the

workshop was best for industrial efficiency. The best employers in the land are now of that opinion. He did not fail there.

Who can tell the horrors of industry which children suffered in factories at the beginning of the last century? Were not the Factory Acts acts of mercy? The country owed them to Robert Owen's inspiration. They saved the whole race of workers from physical deterioration. Were these Acts failures? Millions of children have passed through factories since Owen's day, who, if they knew it (and their parents, too) have reason to bless his name.

He was the first who looked with practical intent into the kingdom of the unborn. He saw that posterity—the silent but inevitable master of us all—if left untrained may efface the triumphs, or dishonour, or destroy the great traditions of our race. He put infant schools into the mind of the world. Have they been failures?

He, when it seemed impossible to any one else, proposed national education for which now all the sects contend. Has that proposal been a failure? In 1871, when the centenary of Owen's birth came round, we asked Prof. Huxley to take the chair. He wrote, in the midst of the struggle for the School Board Bill, saying: "It is my duty to take part in the attempt which the country is now making, to carry into effect some of Robert Owen's most ardently-cherished schemes. I think that every one who is compelled to look closely into the problem of popular education must be led to Owen's conclusions that the infants' school is, so to speak, the key of the position. Robert Owen," Huxley says, "discerned this great fact, and had the courage and patience to work out his theory into a practical reality. That" (Huxley declares) "is his claim—if he had no other—to the enduring gratitude of the people."

Huxley knew that Owen was not a sentimental, speculative, or barren reformer. He was for submitting every plan to experiment before advising it. He carried no dagger in his mouth, as many reformers have done. He cared for no cause that reason could not win. There never was a more cautious innovator, a more practical dreamer, or a more reasoning revolutionist.

Whatever he commended he supported with his purse. It was this that won for him confidence and trust, given to no



compeer of his time. When 80,000 working men marched from Copenhagen Fields to petition the Government to release the Dorchester labourers, it was Mr. Owen they asked to go with them at their head.

It was he who first taught the people the then strange truth that Causation was the law of nature on the mind, and unless we looked for the cause of an evil we might never know the remedy. Every man of sense in Church and State acts on this truth now, but so few knew it in Owen's day that he was accused of unsettling the morality of the world. It was the fertility and newness of his suggestions, as a man of affairs, that gave him renown, and his influence extends to us. This Memorial before us would itself grow old were we to stay to describe all the ideas the world has accepted from Owen. I will name but one more, and that the greatest.

He saw, as no man before him did, that environment is the maker of men. Aristotle, whose praise is in all our Universities, said "Character is Destiny." But how can character be made? The only national way known in Owen's day was by prayer and precept. Owen said there were material means, largely unused, conducive to human improvement. Browning's prayer was—"Make no more giants, God; but elevate the race at once." This was Owen's aim, as far as human means might do it. Great change can only be effected by unity. But—

"Union without knowledge is useless;  
Knowledge without union is powerless."

Then what is the right knowledge? Owen said it consisted in knowing that people came into the world without any intention of doing it; and often with limited capacities, and with disadvantages of person, and with instinctive tendencies which impel them against their will, disqualifications which they did not give themselves. He was the first philosopher who changed repugnance into compassion, and taught us to treat defects of others with sympathy instead of contempt, and to remedy their deficiency, as far as we can, by creating for them amending conditions. Dislike dies in the heart of those who understand this, and the spirit of unity arises. Thus instructed good-will becomes the hand-maid of Co-operation, and Co-operation is the only available power of industry. Since error arises

more from ignorance of facts than from defect of goodness, the reformer with education at command, knows no despair of the betterment of men. This was the angerless philosophy of Owen, which inspired him with a forbearance that never failed him, and gave him that regnant manner which charmed all who met him. We shall see what his doctrine of environment has done for society, if we notice what it began to do in his day, and what it has done since.

Men perished by battle, by tempest, by pestilence. Faith might comfort, but it did not save them. In every town nests of pestilence coexisted with the Churches, which were concerned alone with worship. Disease was unchecked by devotion. Then Owen asked, "Might not safety come by improved material condition?" As the prayer of hope brought no reply, as the scream of agony, if heard, was unanswered, as the priest, with the holiest intent, brought no deliverance, it seemed prudent to try the philosopher and the physician.

Then Corn Laws were repealed, because prayers fed nobody. Then parks were multiplied, because fresh air was found to be a condition of health. Alleys and courts were first abolished, since deadly diseases were bred there. Streets were widened, that towns might be ventilated. Hours of labour were shortened, since exhaustion means liability to epidemic contagion. Recreation was encouraged, as change and rest mean life and strength. Temperance—thought of as self-denial—was found to be a necessity, as excess of any kind in diet, or labour, or pleasure means premature death. Those who took dwellings began to look, not only to drainage and ventilation, but to the ways of their near neighbours, as the most pious family may poison the air you breathe unless they have sanitary habits.

Thus, thanks to the doctrine of national environment which Owen was the first to preach—Knowledge is greater; Life is longer; Health is surer; Disease is limited; Towns are sweeter; Hours of labour are shorter; Men are stronger; Women are fairer; Children are happier; Industry is held in more honour, and is better rewarded; Co-operation carries wholesome food and increased income into a million homes where they were unknown before, and has brought us nearer and nearer to that state of society which Owen strove to create—in which it shall

be impossible for men to be depraved or poor. Thus we justify ourselves for erecting this Memorial to his memory, which I am about to unveil.

The town has erected a Public Library opposite the house in which Mr. Owen was born, to which the Co-operators subscribed £1,000. One part of the Library bears the name of Owen's Wing.



## CHAPTER VII

## THE ENTHUSIASTIC PERIOD. 1820-1830

"Then felt I like some watcher of the skies,  
 When a new planet swims into his ken ;  
 Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes  
 He stared on the Pacific—and his men  
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise,  
 Silent upon a peak in Darien."—KEATS.

THE enchanted wonder which Keats describes on first finding in Chapman's Homer the vigorous Greek texture of the great bard, was akin to that "wild surmise" with which the despairing sons of industry first gazed on that new world of Co-operation then made clear to their view.

To the social reformers the world itself seemed moving in the direction of social colonies. Not only was America under way for the millennium of co-operative life—even prosaic, calculating, utilitarian Scotland was setting sail. France had put out to sea years before under Commander Fourier. A letter arrived from Brussels, bearing date October 2, 1825, addressed to the "Gentlemen of the London Co-operative Society," telling them that the Permanent Committee of the Society of Beneficence had colonial establishments at Wortzel and at Murxplus Ryckewvorse, in the province of Antwerp, where 725 farmhouses were already built ; that 76 were inhabited by free colonists ; and that they had a contract with the Government for the suppression of mendicants, and had already 455 of those interesting creatures collected from the various regions of beggarden in a dépôt, where 1,000 could be accommodated. No wonder there was exultation in Red Lion Square when the slow-moving, dreamy-eyed, much-smoking Dutch were spreading their old-fashioned canvas in

search of the new world. From 1820 to 1830 Co-operation and communities were regarded by the thinking classes as a religion of industry. Communities, the form which the religion of industry was to take, were from 1825 to 1830 as common and almost as frequently announced as joint-stock companies now. In 1826 April brought news that proposals were issued for establishing a community near Exeter—to be called the Devon and Exeter Co-operative Society. Gentlemen of good family and local repute, who were not, as some are now, afraid to look at a community through one of Lord Rosse's long-range telescopes, gave open aid to the proposal. Two public meetings were held in May, at the Swan Tavern. The Hon. Lionel Dawson presided on both occasions. Such was the enthusiasm about the new system that more than four hundred persons were willing to come forward with sums of £5 to £10; one hundred others were prepared to take shares at £25 each; and two or three promised aid to the extent of £2,000. Meetings in favour of this project were held at Tiverton, and in the Mansion House, Bridgewater. The zeal was real and did not delay. In July the promoters bought thirty-seven acres of land within seven miles of Exeter. A gardener, a carpenter, a quarrier (there being a stone quarry on the estate), a drainer, a well-sinker, a clay temperer, and a moulder were at once set to work.

The Metropolitan Co-operative Society, not to be behind when the provinces were going forward, put forth a plan for establishing a community within fifty miles of London. Shares were taken up and £4,000 subscribed in 1826. There was a wise fear of prematurity of proceeding shown, and there was also an infatuation of confidence exhibited in many ways. However, the society soberly put out an advertisement to landowners, saying, "Wanted to rent, with a view to purchase, or on a long lease, from 500 to 2,000 acres of good land, in one or several contiguous farms; the distance from London not material if the offer is eligible." Information was to be sent to Mr. J. Corsa, Red Lion Square. Four years earlier Scotland, a country not at all prone to Utopian projects not likely to pay, entertained the idea of community before Orbiston was named. The *Economist* announced that the subscriptions for the formation of one of the new villages at

Motherwell, though the public had not been appealed to, amounted to £20,000.<sup>1</sup>

Eighteen hundred and twenty-six was a famous year for communistic projects. A Dublin Co-operative Society was formed on the 28th of February, at a meeting held at the Freemasons' Tavern, Dawson Street, Dublin. Captain O'Brien, R.N., occupied the chair. The Dublin Co-operative Society invited Lord Cloncurry to dine with them. His lordship wrote to say that he was more fully convinced than he was four years ago, of the great advantage it would be to Ireland to establish co-operative villages on Mr. Owen's plan, and spoke of Mr. Owen in curious terms as the "benevolent and highly-respectable Owen." This was nine years after Mr. Owen had astounded mankind by his London declaration "against all the religions of the world."<sup>2</sup>

Two years before the *Economist* appeared, as the first serial advocate of Co-operation, pamphleteers were in the field on behalf of social improvement. Mr. Owen certainly had the distinction of inspiring many writers. One "Philanthropos" published in 1819 a powerful pamphlet on the "Practicability of Mr. Owen's plan to improve the condition of the lower classes." It was inscribed to William Wilberforce (father of the Bishop of Winchester), whom the writer considered to be "intimately associated with every subject involving the welfare of mankind," and who "regarded political measures abstractedly from the individuals with whom they originated." Mr. Wilberforce, he said, had shown that "Christianity steps beyond the narrow bound of national advantage in quest of universal good, and does not prompt us to love our country at the expense of our integrity."<sup>3</sup>

The *Economist* was concluded in January, 1822. It was of the small magazine size, and was the neatest and most business-looking journal issued in connection with Co-operation for many years. After the 32nd number the quality and taste of the printing fell off—some irregularity in its issue occurred. Its conductor explained in the 51st number that its printing had been put into the hands of the Co-operative

<sup>1</sup> *Economist*. No. 27, July, 1821.

<sup>2</sup> *Co-operative Magazine*, 1826, p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> These were Bishop Watson's words adopted by "Philanthropos."



and Economical Society, "and that it would continue to be regularly executed by them." After the 52nd number the *Economist* was discontinued, without any explanation being given. It was bound in two volumes, and sold at 7s. each in boards. Many numbers purported to be "published every Saturday morning by Mr. Wright, bookseller, No. 46, Fleet Street, London, where the trade and newsmen may be supplied, and where orders, communications to the editor, post paid, are respectfully requested to be addressed." Early numbers bore the name of G. Auld, Greville Street. With No. 22 the names appear of J. and C. Adlard, Bartholomew Close. With No. 32 the imprint is "G. Mudie, printer"—no address. After No. 51 the intimation is—"Printed at the Central House of the Co-operative and Economical Society, No. 1, Guilford Street East, Spafields."

Twelve years later, when the *Gazette of the Exchange Bazaars* was started, a fly-leaf was issued, which stated, "This work will be conducted by the individual who founded the first of the co-operative societies in London, 1820, and who edited the *Economist*, in 1821-22, the *Political Economist and Universal Philanthropist*, in 1823, the *Advocate of the Working Classes*, in 1826-27; and who has besides lectured upon the principles to be discussed in the forthcoming publication (*The Exchange Bazaars Gazette*), in various parts of Great Britain. He enters on his undertaking, therefore, after having been prepared for his task by previous and long-continued researches." Mr. Owen never thought much of co-operative societies, regarding grocers' shops as ignominious substitutes for the reconstruction of the world.

The dedication of the *Economist* was as follows:—

"To Mr. John Maxwell, Lord Archibald Hamilton, Sir William de Crespigny, Bart., Mr. Dawson, Mr. Henry Brougham, Mr. H. Gurney, and Mr. William Smith, the philanthropic members of the House of Commons, who, on the motion of Mr. Maxwell, on the 26th of June, 1821, for an address to the throne, praying that a commission might be appointed to investigate Mr. Owen's system, had the courage and consistency to make the motion; this volume is inscribed in testimony of heartfelt respect and gratitude by THE ECONOMIST."

The earliest name of literary note connected with Co-operation was that of Mr. William Thompson. He was an abler man than John Gray. Though an Irishman, he was singularly dispassionate. He possessed fortune and studious habits. He resided some years with Jeremy Bentham, and the methodical arrangement of his chief work, the "Distribution of Wealth," betrays Bentham's literary influence. This work was written in 1822. In 1825 he published "An Appeal of one-half the human race—Women—against the pretensions of the other half—Men." It was a reply to James Mill—to a paragraph in his famous "Article on Government." Mr. Thompson issued, in 1827, "Labour Rewarded," in which he explained the possibility of conciliating the claims of labour and capital and securing to workmen the "whole products of their exertions." This last work consisted of business-like "Directions for the Establishment of Co-operative Communities." These "directions" were accompanied by elaborate plans and tables. A moderate number of pioneers might, with that book in their hand, found a colony or begin a new world. He consulted personally Robert Owen, Mr. Hamilton (whom he speaks of as an authority), Abram Combe, and others who had had experience in community-making. Jeremy Bentham's wonderful constitutions, which he was accustomed to furnish to foreign states, were evidently in the mind of his disciple, Mr. Thompson, when he compiled this closely-printed octavo volume of nearly three hundred pages. He placed on his title-page a motto from *Le Producteur*: "The age of Gold, Happiness, which a blind credulity has placed in times past is before us." The world wanted to see the thing done. It desired, like Diogenes, to have motion proved. In practical directions for forming communities exhaustive instructions were precisely the things needed. Where every step was new and every combination unknown, Thompson wrote a book like a steam engine, marvellous in the scientific adjustments of its parts. His "Distribution of Wealth" is the best exposition to which reference can be made of the pacific and practical nature of English communism. He was a solid but far from a lively writer. It requires a sense of duty to read through his book—curiosity is not sufficient. Political economists in Thompson's day held, as Mr. Senior has expressed it,

*Orbison*

that "It is not with *happiness* but with *wealth* that I am concerned as a political economist." Thompson's idea was "to inquire into the principles of the distribution of wealth *most conducive to human happiness*." His life was an answer to those who hold that Socialism implies sensualism. For the last twenty years of his life he neither partook of animal food nor intoxicating drinks, because he could better pursue his literary labours without them. He left his body for dissection—a bold thing to do in his time—a useful thing to do in order to break somewhat through the prejudices of the ignorant against dissection for surgical ends. Compliance with his wish nearly led to a riot among the peasantry of the neighbourhood of Clonkeen, Rosscarbery, County of Cork, where he died.

Another early and memorable name in co-operative history is that of Abram Combe. It is very rarely that a person of any other nationality dominates the mind of a Scotchman; but Mr. Owen, although a Welshman, did this by Abram Combe, who, in 1823, published a small book named "Old and New Systems"—a work excelling in capital letters. This was one of Mr. Combe's earliest statements of his master's views, which he reproduced with the fidelity which Dumont showed to Bentham, but with less ability. There were three Combes—George, Abram, and Andrew. All were distinguished in their way, but George became the best known. George Combe was the phrenologist, who made a reputation by writing the "Constitution of Man," though he had borrowed without acknowledgment the conception from Gall and Spurzheim, especially Spurzheim, who had published an original little book on the "Laws of Human Nature"; but to George Combe belonged the merit which belonged to Archdeacon Paley with respect to the argument from design. Combe restated, animated, and enlarged into an impressive volume what before was fragmentary, slender, suggestive, but without the luminous force of illustrative facts and practical applications which Combe supplied. The second brother, Dr. Andrew Combe, had all the talent of the family for exposition, and his works upon physiology were the first in interest and popularity in their time; but Abram had more sentiment than both the others put together, and ultimately sacrificed himself as well



as his fortune in endeavours to realise the new social views in practice.

In 1824 Robert Dale Owen (Mr. Owen's eldest son) appeared as an author for the first time. His book was entitled "An Outline of the System of Education at New Lanark." It was published by Longman & Co., London, written at New Lanark, 1823. It was dedicated to his father. The author must have been a young man then.<sup>1</sup> Yet his book shows completeness of thought and that clear and graceful expression by which, beyond all co-operative writers, Robert Dale Owen was subsequently distinguished. His outline is better worth printing now than many books on New Lanark which have appeared; it gives so interesting a description of the construction of the schools, the methods and principles of tuition pursued. The subjects taught to the elder classes were the earth (its animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms), astronomy, geography, mathematics, zoology, botany, mineralogy, agriculture, manufactures, architecture, drawing, music, chemistry, and ancient and modern history. The little children were occupied with elementary education, military drill, and dancing, at which Mr. Owen's Quaker partners were much discomfited. The schoolrooms were picture galleries and museums. Learning ceased to be a task and a terror, and became a wonder and delight. The reader who thinks of the beggarly education given by this wealthy English nation will feel admiration of the princely mind of Robert Owen, who gave to the children of weavers this magnificent scheme of instruction. No manufacturer has arisen in England so great as he.

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The London Co-operative Society was formally commenced in October, 1824. It occupied rooms in Burton Street, Burton Crescent. This quiet, and at that time pleasant and suburban, street was quite a nursery-ground of new-born principles. Then, as now, it had no carriage way at either end. In the house at the Tavistock Place corner, lived for many years James Pierrepont Greaves, the famous mystic. As secluded Burton Street was too much out of the way for the convenience of large assemblages, the discussions commenced by the society

<sup>1</sup> His Autobiography, since published, states that his age was twenty-two, and that this was his first work.

there, were transferred to the Crown and Rolls Rooms, in Chancery Lane. Here overflowing audiences met—political economists seem to have been the principal opponents. Their chief argument against the new system, was the Malthusian doctrine against “the tendency of population to press against the means of subsistence.”

In the month of April, 1825, the London Co-operative Society hired a first-floor in Picket Street, Temple Bar, for the private meetings of members, who were much increasing at that time. In November of the same year, 1825, the society took the house, No. 36, Red Lion Square. Mr. J. Corss was the Secretary. The London Co-operative Society held weekly debates. One constant topic was the position taken by Mr. Owen—that man is not properly the subject of praise or blame, reward or punishment. It also conducted bazaars for the sale of goods manufactured by the provincial societies.

At New Harmony, Indiana, David Dale Owen, writing to his father, related that they had had debates there, and Mary and Jane, daughters or daughter-in-laws of Mr. Owen, both addressed the meetings on several occasions. After all the discourses opportunity of discussion and questioning was uniformly and everywhere afforded.

The second serial journal representing Co-operation appeared in America, though its inspiration was English. It was the *New Harmony Gazette*. Its motto was : “If we cannot reconcile all opinions let us endeavour to unite all hearts.”

The recommencement of a co-operative publication in England took place in 1826. The first was entitled the *Co-operative Magazine and Monthly Herald*, and appeared in January. It was “printed by Whiting and Branston, Beaufort House, Strand,” and “published by Knight and Lacey, Watt’s Head, Paternoster Row.” It purported to be “sold by J. Templeman, 39, Tottenham Court Road ; and also at the office of the London Co-operative Society, 36, Red Lion Square.” The second number of this magazine was published by Hunt and Clark, Tavistock Street. A change in the publisher occurred very early, and additional agents were announced as J. Sutherland, Calton Street, Edinburgh ; R. Griffin & Co., Hutchinson Street, Glasgow ; J. Bolstead,

Cork ; and A. M. Graham, College Green, Dublin. The third number announced a change in the Cork publisher ; J. Loftus, of 107, Kirkpatrick Street, succeeded Mr. Bolstead, and a new store, the "Orbiston Store," was for the first time named.<sup>1</sup> The co-operative writers of this magazine were not wanting in candour even at their own expense. Mr. Charles Clark relates "that while one of the New Harmony philosophers was explaining to a stranger the beauties of a system which dispensed with rewards and punishments, he observed a boy who approved of the system busily helping himself to the finest plums in his garden. Forgetting his argument, he seized the nearest stick at hand and castigated the young thief in a very instructive manner."<sup>2</sup>

The worthy editor of the *Co-operative Magazine* was one of the fool friends of progress. In his first number he gravely reviews a grand plan of one James Hamilton, for rendering "Owenism Consistent with our Civil and Religious Institutions." His proposal is to begin the new world with one hundred tailors, who are to be unmarried and all of them handsome of person. Hamilton proposed to marry all the handsome tailors by ballot to a similar number of girls. After sermon and prayer the head partner and minister, assisted by foremen of committees, were to put the written names of the men in one box and those of the girls in another. The head partner was then to mix the male names and the minister the female names. When a man's name was proclaimed aloud, the minister was immediately to draw out the name of a girl from his box. The couple were then requested to consider themselves united by decision of heaven. By this economical arrangement young couples were saved all the anxiety of selection, loss of time in wooing, the suspense of soliciting the approval of parents or guardians. The distraction of courtship, sighs, tears, smiles, doubts, fears, jealousies, expectations, dis-

<sup>1</sup> I preserve the names and addresses of the earlier societies' printers and publishers. It is interesting to know the places where historic movements first commenced and the persons by whose aid, or enthusiasm, or courage the first publicity was given to them. Every part of London has been dotted with shops where they were printed and sold, with coffee-shops where they were discussed, and with printing offices where the struggling publications were carried to be printed when one house after another declined to print any more.

<sup>2</sup> Private Letter from New Harmony, 1825 (*Co-operative Magazine*, vol. i. No. 1, p. 50. 1826).



appointments, hope and despair were all avoided by this compendious arrangement. How any editor, not himself an out-patient of a lunatic asylum, could have occupied pages of the *Co-operative Magazine* by giving publicity to such a pamphlet more ineffably absurd than here depicted, it is idle to conjecture. Could this be the Mr. Hamilton, of Dalzell, who joined Mr. Abram Combe in the purchase of Orbiston for £20,000, and who offered to let lands at Motherwell for a community, and to guarantee the repayment of £40,000 to be expended on the erection of the buildings?

Apart from the eccentric views which we have recounted (if indeed they were his) Mr. Hamilton was distinguished for the great interest he took in co-operative progress and the munificence by which he assisted it. In the projected community of Motherwell he was joined by several eminent men, who had reason to believe that a large and well-supported co-operative colony might be made remunerative, besides affording to the Government of the day a practical example of what might be done. Several gentlemen in England subscribed many thousands each in furtherance of this project. Mr. Morrison, of the well-known firm of Morrison and Dillon, was one of those who put down his name for £5,000.

The *Co-operative Magazine* of 1826 was adorned by an engraving of Mr. Owen's quadrilateral community. The scenery around it was mountainous and tropical. The said scenery was intended to represent Indiana, where Mr. Owen had bought land with a view to introduce the new world in America. Mr. A. Brisbane prefixes to his translation of Fourier's "Destiny of Man" the Fourier conception of a phalanstere. Mr. Owen's design of a community greatly excelled the phalanstere in completeness and beauty. Mr. A. Combe exhibited designs of his Scotch community at Orbiston, but Mr. Owen had the most luxuriant imagination this way. Artists who came near him to execute commissions soon discovered that the materialist philosopher, as they imagined him, had no mean taste for the ideal.

Lamarck's theory of the "Origin of Species" was introduced into the *Co-operative Magazine*—a harmless subject certainly, but one that was theologically mischievous for forty years after. "Scripture Politics" was another topic with which

co-operators afflicted themselves. "Phrenology," another terror of the clergy, appeared. Discussions upon marriage followed, but, as the co-operators never contemplated anything but equal opportunities of divorce for rich and poor, the subject was irrelevant. The editor actually published articles on the "Unhappiness of the Higher Orders,"<sup>1</sup> and provided remedies for it, as though that was any business of theirs. It was time enough for readers to sigh over the griefs of the rich when they had secured the gladness of the poor.

In those days a practical agitator (Carlile), who had the courage to undergo long years of imprisonment to free the press, thought the world was to be put right by a science of "Somatopsychonologia."<sup>2</sup> There were co-operators—Allen Davenport, the simple-hearted ardent advocate of agrarian views, among them—who were prepared to undertake this nine-syllabled study.

Every crotcheteer runs at the heels of new pioneers. Co-operative pages advocated the "Civil Rights of Women," to which they were inclined from a sense of justice; and the advocates of that question will find some interesting reading in co-operative literature. Their pages were open to protest against the game laws. The *Co-operative Magazine* gave almost as much space to the discussion of the ranunculus, the common buttercup, as it did to the "new system of society." The medical botanists very early got at the poor co-operators. A co-operative society was considered a sort of free marketplace, where everybody could deposit specimens of his notions for inspection or sale.

In 1827, a gentleman who commanded great respect in his day, Mr. Julian Hibbert, printed a circular at his own press on behalf of the "Co-operative Fund Association." He avowed himself as "seriously devoted to the system of Mr. Owen": and Hibbert was a man who meant all he said and who knew how to say exactly what he meant. Here is one brief appeal by him to the people, remarkable for justness of thought and vigorous directness of language: "Would you be free? be worthy of freedom: mental liberty is the pledge of political

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative Magazine*, No. III.

<sup>2</sup> A Greek compound, expressing a knowledge of body, soul, and mind.

liberty. Unlearn your false knowledge, and endeavour to obtain real knowledge. Look around you; compare all things; know your own dignity; correct your vicious habits; renounce superfluities; despise idleness, drunkenness, gambling, and fighting; guard against false friends; and learn to *think* (and if possible to *act*) independently." This language shows the rude materials out of which co-operators had sometimes to be made. In personal appearance Julian Hibbert strikingly resembled Shelley. He had at least the courage, the gentleness, and generosity of the poet. Hibbert had ample fortune, and was reputed one of the best Greek scholars of his day. Being called upon to give evidence on a trial in London, he honestly declined to take the oath on the ground that he did not believe in an Avenging God, and was therefore called an atheist, and was treated in a ruffianly manner by the eloquent and notorious Charles Phillips, who was not a man of delicate scruples himself, being afterwards accused of endeavouring to fix the guilt of murdering Lord William Russell upon an innocent man, after Couvoisier had confessed his guilt to him. Hibbert's courage and generosity was shown in many things. He visited Carlile when he was confined in Dorchester Gaol for heresy, and on learning that a political prisoner there had been visited by some friend of position who had give him £1,000, Hibbert at once said: "It shall not appear, Mr. Carlile, that you are less esteemed for vindicating the less popular liberty of conscience. I will give you £1,000." He gave Mr. Carlile the money there and then. It was Mr. Hibbert's desire in the event of his death that his body should be at the service of the Royal College of Surgeons, being another of those gentlemen who thought it useful by his own example to break down the prejudice of the poor, against their remains being in some cases serviceable to physiological science. This object was partly carried out in Mr. Hibbert's case by Mr. Baume. Some portion of Mr. Hibbert's fortune came into possession of Mrs. Captain Grenfell, a handsome wild Irish lady after the order of Lady Morgan. Mr. Hibbert's intentions, however, seem to have been pretty faithfully carried out, for thirty years after his death I was aware of five and ten pound notes occasionally percolating into the hands of one or other unfriended advocate of unpopular forms of social and



heretical liberty, who resembled the apostles at least in one respect—they had “neither purse nor scrip.”

During 1827, and two years later, the *Co-operative Magazine* was issued as a sixpenny monthly. All the publications of this period, earlier and later, were advertised as being obtainable at 19, Greville Street, Hatton Garden, then a co-operative centre, and at co-operative stores in town and country. If all stores sold the publication then it proved that they better understood the value of special co-operative literature than many do now.

It was on May 1, 1828, that the first publication appeared entitled the *Co-operator*. It was a small paper of four pages only, issued monthly at one penny. It resembled a halfpenny two-leaved tract. The whole edition printed would hardly have cost thirty shillings if none were sold.<sup>1</sup> It was continued for twenty-six months, ceasing on August 1, 1830. The twenty-six numbers consisted of twenty-six papers, all written by the editor, Dr. King, who stated that they were concluded because “the object for which they were commenced had been attained. The principles of Co-operation had been disseminated among the working classes and made intelligible to them.” This was not true twenty years later, but everybody was sanguine in those days, and saw the things which were not, more clearly than the things which were.<sup>2</sup> The chief cause of failure which the editor specifies as having overtaken some co-operative societies was defect in account keeping. Of course, as credit was customary in the early stores, accounts would be the weak point with workmen. Dr. King wrote to Lord (then Henry) Brougham, M.P., an account of the Brighton co-operators. Lord Brougham asked Mr. M. D. Hill to bring the matter of Co-operation before the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Timid members on the council were afraid of it, as many councils are still. It would have been one of the most memorable papers of that famous society had they treated this

<sup>1</sup> It bore as printer's name Sickelmore, Brighton, the last number (the first that bore any publisher's name) gave that of Taylor and Son, North Street, same town. It was always to be had at the Co-operative Bazaar, 19, Greville Street, Hatton Garden, London.

<sup>2</sup> One of the disciples of Fourier, on being told that organised life was impossible because it was too beautiful, answered: “It is too beautiful not to be possible.”

subject. They never did treat any original subject, and this would have been one.

Mr. Craig, who had extensive personal knowledge of early societies, states that one was formed at Bradford in 1828. A stray number of the *Brighton Co-operator* (the one edited by Dr. King), soiled and worn, found its way into Halifax, and led to the formation of the first co-operative society there, owing to the foresight and devotion to social development of Mr. J. Nicholson, a name honourably known, and still remembered with respect, in Halifax. His son-in-law, Mr. David Crossley, of Brighouse, all his life manifested intelligent and untiring interest in Co-operation.

The first Birmingham co-operative rules were framed in 1828 by Mr. John Rabone, a well-known commercial name in that town, who was a frequent writer in early co-operative years. The reports of the early success of the Orbiston community reached Birmingham, and had great influence there. Some who had seen the place gave so good an account of it, that it was the immediate cause of the first Birmingham co-operative society being formed.

On January 1, 1829, the first number of the *Associate* was issued, price one penny, "published at the store of the first London Co-operative Trading Association, 2, Jerusalem Passage, Clerkenwell." The *Associate*, a well-chosen name, modestly stated that it was "put forth to ascertain how far the working class were disposed to listen to its suggestion of means by which they themselves may become the authors of a lasting and almost unlimited improvement of their own condition in life." The *Associate* was from the beginning a well-arranged, modest little periodical, and it was the first paper to summarise the rules of the various co-operative associations.

The author of "Paul Clifford" takes the editor of the *British Co-operator* by storm, who states that this work bids fair to raise Mr. Bulwer to that enviable pinnacle of fame which connects the genius of the author with the virtues of the citizen, the philanthropist with the profundity of the philosopher.<sup>1</sup>

The Society for the Promotion of Co-operative Knowledge

<sup>1</sup> *British Co-operator*, p. 62. 1829.

held regular quarterly meetings, commencing in 1829. They were reported with all the dignity of a co-operative parliament in the *Weekly Free Press*, a Radical paper of the period. The proceedings were reprinted in a separate form. This society bore the name of the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge first in 1830.

This publication, entitled *The Weekly Free Press*, was regarded as a prodigy of newspapers on the side of Co-operation. The editor of the aforesaid *British Co-operator* described it as "an adamantine bulwark, which no gainsayer dare run against without suffering irretrievable loss." No doubt "gainsayers" so warned, prudently kept aloof, but the "adamantine journal" ran down itself, suffering irretrievable loss in the process.

No one could accuse the early co-operators of being wanting in large ideas. It was coolly laid down, without any dismay at the magnitude of the undertaking, that the principles of Co-operation were intended to secure equality of privileges for all the human race. That is a task not yet completed.

In addition they made overtures to bring about the general elevation of the human race, together with universal knowledge and happiness. Ten years before the British Association for the Advancement of Science was devised in Professor Phillips's Tea-room in the York Museum, and forty years before Dr. Hastings ventured to propose to Lord Brougham the establishment of a National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, the Co-operative Reformers set up, in 1829, a "British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge."

It had its quarterly meetings, some of which were held in the theatre of the Mechanics' Institution, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London, known as Dr. Birkbeck's Institution. The speeches delivered were evidently studied and ambitious, far beyond the character of modern speeches on Co-operation, which are mostly businesslike, abrupt, and blunt. Among those at these early meetings were Mr. John Cleave, well known as a popular newsvendor—when only men of spirit dare be newsvendors—whose daughter subsequently married Mr. Henry Vincent, the eminent lecturer, who graduated in the fiery school of "Chartism," including imprisonment. Mr. William Lovett, a frequent speaker, was later in life

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imprisoned with John Collins for two years in Warwick Gaol, where they devised, wrote, and afterwards published the best book on the organisation and education of the Chartist party ever issued from that body. Mr. Lovett made speeches in 1830 with that ornate swell in his sentences with which he wrote resolutions at the National Association, in High Holborn, twenty years later, when W. J. Fox delivered Sunday evening orations there. Mr. Lovett was the second secretary of the chief co-operative society in London, which met at 19, Greville Street, Hatton Garden.

The fourth report of the British Co-operative Association announced the *Liverpool*, *Norwich*, and *Leeds Mercuries*; the *Carlisle Journal*, the *Newry Telegraph*, the *Chester Courant*, the *Blackburn Gazette*, the *Halifax Chronicle*, besides others, as journals engaged in discussing Co-operation. The *Westmoreland Advertiser* is described as devoted to it.<sup>1</sup>

The first Westminster co-operative society, which met in the infant schoolroom, gave lectures on science. Mr. David Mallock, A.M., delivered a lecture on "Celestial Mechanics"; Mr. Dewhurst, a surgeon, lectured on "Anatomy," and complaint was made that he used Latin and Greek terms without translating them.<sup>2</sup> The *British Co-operator*, usually conducted with an editorial sense of responsibility, announced to its readers that "it is confidently said that Mr. Owen will hold a public meeting in the City of London Tavern, early in Easter week; and it is expected that his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex will take the chair. We have no doubt it will be well attended and produce a great sensation among the people." This premature announcement was likely to deter the Duke from attending.

The first London co-operative community is reported as holding a meeting on the 22nd of April, 1829, at the Ship Coffee-house, Featherstone Street, City Road. Mr. Jennison spoke, who gave it as his conviction that the scheme could be carried out with £5 shares, payable at sixpence per week.<sup>3</sup>

The first Pimlico Association was formed in December, 1829. Its store was opened on the 27th of February, 1830,

<sup>1</sup> *British Co-operator*, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20. 1829.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

and between that date and the 6th of May it had made £32 of net profit. Its total property amounted to £140. Its members were eighty-two.

The first Maidstone co-operative society was in force in 1830, and held its public meetings in the Britannia Inn, George Street. A Rev. Mr. Pope, of Tunbridge Wells, gave them disquietude by crying—"Away with such happiness [that promised by Co-operation] as is inconsistent with the gospel." As nobody else promised any happiness to the working men, Mr. Pope might as well have left them the consolation of hoping for it. He would have had his chance when they got the happiness, which yet lags on its tardy way.

In 1830 Mr. J. Jenkinson, "treasurer of the Kettering Co-operative Society," confirmed its existence by writing an ambitious paper upon the "Co-operative System."

England has never seen so many co-operative papers as 1830 saw. Since the *Social Economist* was transferred to the promoters of the Manchester Co-operative News Company, in 1869, there has been even in London no professed co-operative journal.

The *Agricultural Economist*, representing the Agricultural and Horticultural Association, is the most important-looking journal which has appeared in London in the interests of Co-operation—"Associative Topics" formed a department in this paper.

In 1830, when the *Co-operative Magazine* was four years old, the Co-operative Miscellany (also a monthly magazine) commenced, and with many defects, had more popular life in it than any other. The editor was, I believe, the printer of his paper. Anyhow, he meant putting things to rights with a vigorous hand. His *Miscellany* afterwards described itself as a "Magazine of Useful Knowledge"; a sub-title, borrowed, apparently, from the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, then making a noise in the world. The editor of this *Miscellany* held that co-operative knowledge should be placed first in the species useful. It was then a novel order of knowledge. The *Miscellany* was of the octavo size; the typographical getting-up was of the provincial kind, and the title-page had the appearance of a small window-bill. It was

printed by W. Hill, of Bank Street, Maidstone. The editor professed that his magazine contained a development of the principles of the system. The allusion evidently was to Mr. Owen's system. Of the people he says "many of them are beginning to feel the spark of British independence to glow." He tells us that some "are moving onwards towards the diffusion of the views of Mr. Owen, of New Lanark, now generally known as the principles of Co-operation."

Speaking of the meeting of the British Co-operative Association, at which Mr. Owen spoke, "who was received with enthusiastic and long-continued cheering," the editor of the *Co-operative Miscellany*, said: "The theatre was filled with persons of an encouraging and respectable appearance." Persons of an "encouraging appearance" are surely one of the daintiest discoveries of enthusiasm.

At this time Mr. Owen held Sunday morning lectures in the Mechanics' Institution, followed, says this *Miscellany* "by a conversazione at half-past three o'clock, and a lecture in the evening."

Early in 1830 appeared, in magazine form, the *British Co-operator*, calling itself also "A Record and Review of Co-operative and Entertaining Knowledge." This publication made itself a business organ of the movement, and addressed itself to the task of organising it. To the early stores it furnished valuable advice, and the sixth number "became a sort of text-book to co-operators." No. 22 had an article which professed to be "from the pen of a gentleman holding an important office in the State," and suggested that intending co-operators should bethink themselves of bespeaking the countenance of some patron in the infancy of their Co-operation—the clergyman of the parish, or a resident magistrate, who might give them weights and scales and a few shelves for their store shop. The members were to sign an arbitration bond, under which *all* questions of property in the society shall be finally decided by the patron, who must not be removable, otherwise than by his own consent. The plan might have led to the extension of Co-operation in rural districts. And as the authority of the patron was merely to extend to questions of property when no law existed for its protection, the members would have had their own way in



social regulations. All the patron could have done would have been to take away his scales, weights, and shelves. A very small fund, when the society was once fairly established, would have enabled them to have purchased or replaced these things. The British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge, published in the *Weekly Free Press* a special protest against "patrons of any sort, especially the clergyman or the magistrate." The early socialists spoke with two voices. With one they denounced the wealthier classes as standing aloof from the people and lending them no kind of help, and with the other described them as coming forward with "insidious plans" of interference with them. It was quite wise to counsel the working classes "to look to themselves and be their own patrons," but it was not an encouraging thing to gentlemen to see one of their order "holding an important office in the State," kicked, "by order of the committee," for coming forward with what was, for all they knew, a well-meant suggestion.

The *British Co-operator* prepared articles for the guidance of trustees and directors or committees of co-operative societies. It gave them directions how to make their storekeeper a responsible and punishable person. How to procure licences. How to execute orders and schemes of book-keeping. It usefully remarked: "We regret that the neglect of the first Bloomsbury society to take legal measures to secure their property has deprived them of the power to recover their trading stock from four of the members, one of whom was *nominally* a trustee. The parties entered the store at night, and decamped with all the movables they could carry off. This has broken up the society. We still repeat, the *trustees* of a society *ought not* to be members of it."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Haigh, of Mill's Bridge Society, Huddersfield, wrote to inform the editor, that on the 14th ultimo "they were obliged to discharge their *storekeeper*, as he had defrauded them of much property during the quarter"—a circumstance which subsequently occurred very frequently in that district. Some of the stores appear to have been troubled by the disappearance

<sup>1</sup> The reason being, that if he were a member the law would then regard him as a partner, who might, as such, appropriate the funds to his own use. The law is changed now.

of cheese in larger proportions than the sales accounted for, and an announcement was made of the formation of a Mouse-trap Committee.

It was a law in England that no partner should sue his co-partner for any fraud or breach of agreement by an action at common law; his only mode of proceeding against his partner was to file a bill in equity in the Court of Chancery. This mode of proceeding against any member of a co-operative trading society, from the immense expense attached to it (for £60 would only meet the cost of filing the bill), was rendered impossible for a working man to adopt. Therefore it was better for him to pocket the first loss sustained rather than throw two or three years' hard-earned savings into the engulfing jaw of a Chancery suit.

A discussion arose upon "Educated Shopmen" in the *British Co-operator* where it was proposed that the storekeeper should be "a person of gainly appearance—clean, active, obliging, and possessing a high sense of honour." Mr. Faber, contended that the storekeeper ought not to be regarded "as a servant only, but as a friend and brother of the associates."

Efforts were then being made in London to establish an agency for the sale of co-operative manufactures. In 1830 the distressed co-operators of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green weavers produced a co-operative silk handkerchief. It was an article that only ladies and gentlemen would buy in sufficient numbers to be of any advantage; but the disastrous proneness of enthusiasm to be instant in season and out of season, led to there appearing upon it a design representing the inordinate possessions of the upper classes, so that no gentleman could use it without seeing the reproach.

The House of Commons published a paper detailing the attempts happily being made to put down Hindoo suttees. The *British Co-operator* writes upon it thus: "Mr. Owen is right in saying that the period of a great moral change which he has announced, is fast approaching. There is scarcely a publication which issues from the press that does not bring forward some new evidence of it." The co-operators at this period believed in the immediate advent of Mr. Owen's system as implicitly as the early Christians believed in the

coming of Christ, and every new and hopeful incident of the day was regarded as a shadow, cast by the new world before it.

Dr. Epps<sup>1</sup> and his system of phrenology, semi-Christian and semi-materialistic, is introduced in the *British Co-operator*, and Dr. Henry McCormac, of Belfast—described as “one of the illuminati of the age”—is noticed as the author of a work on the moral and physical condition of the working class. Dr. McCormac was a promoter of social as well as medical ideas, and was known as a teacher of mark. His son, a well-known physician, was the author of similar works. Dr. Epps, a leader in homœopathy when it was ill-regarded, took a sincere interest in advancing liberal opinion. In the *British Co-operator* a co-operative catechism was published, in the form of a dialogue between one Tom Seekout and Jack Tellall, a co-operator.

After nine numbers had been published of the *Associate*, which bore no date save that of London, 1830, by which its times of appearance could be told, it took the second title of *Co-operative Mirror*. The tenth number reproduced the catechism with pictorial embellishments, quite of the Catnach order of art, representing Tom Seekout, a dilapidated rascal, who wore breeches and stockings with holes in them, smoked a pipe, had a battered hat, and was very thin. He is shown as coming out of the “Pipe and Puncheon” public-house, a far less dismal place, it must be owned, than the drawing of the co-operative stores opposite—a plain-looking, solid, rather dreary house, bearing the name “Co-operative Society” over the door. Before this stands a smiling, well-contented-looking fellow, in good health and compendious whiskers, which are apparently the product of the store, as poor Tom Seekout has none. Jack Tellall, the co-operator wears a hat with a brim of copious curvature, a coat evidently cut by some Poole of the period, voluminous white trousers, and a watch and seals that would be sure to have excited Mr. Fagin. In the distance, between the “Pipe and Puncheon” and the “Co-operative Society,” is a remarkable church, very much given to steeple. The pathway to it is entirely devoid of travellers; but it is quite evident that Jack Tellall, like a well-behaved co-operator,

<sup>1</sup> Whose cocoa is still sold.



is on his way there, when he falls in with Tom Seekout, who confesses that his elbows are not presentable to the beadle, and that his belly is pinched in like the squire's greyhound. Jack Tellall informs him, in the course of an amusing dialogue, how Co-operation will put all that to rights. Number 11 of this publication was printed on good paper in clear type, and poor Tom Seekout, who appeared in Number 10, and our decorous friend Jack Tellall, continue their dialogue under conditions admissible in respectable society, and the engraving was a miracle of improvement. It represented a community of majestic and castellated proportions, quite a city of the sun, resplendent on a plateau, raising its turrets above an umbrageous forest which surrounded it, with just one glorious pathway visible by which it was accessible. Beyond was the far-stretching sea, and from above the sun sent down delighting beams through clouds which evidently hung enraptured over the happy spot. Not even Ebenezer Elliott, with his sharp-eyed criticism, could detect a single evidence of primness inflicted upon the wild luxuriance of nature. There has been only one portrait published, which represented Mr. Owen as a gentleman; and this engraving of a community, in No. 11 of the *Associate*, is the only one that had the genuine air of Paradise about it. No doubt the *Associate* was indebted for it to Mr. Minter Morgan, who had introduced it into his "Hampden in the Nineteenth Century."

Among the correspondents of the *British Co-operator* was Josiah Warren. He wrote from Cincinnati, January 30, 1830, to recommend a scheme of cheap printing, of which he was the inventor. Considering the power of giving a monopoly by patents absurd, he makes known his scheme and offers it to any one to adopt. Application was to be made to the *Free Inquirer*, conducted in New York by Frances Wright and R. D. Owen. Like Paine, Warren made a present to the public of those copyrights in inventions and books, which in Paine's case made others rich and left the author poor. The world, which is apt to despise reformers for being always indigent, should remember how some of them became so.

Mr. Josiah Warren was a member of Mr. Owen's community at New Harmony in 1826, and it was there he conceived the idea that the error of Mr. Owen's principles

was combination. Mr. Warren gave this doctrine the name of Individuality—his system being to let everybody have his own way in everything, at his own cost, which has hitherto been found to be an expensive form of waywardness.

Mrs. Wheeler, a familiar name in co-operative literature, was a lady who very sensibly advocated the usefulness of women taking part in public affairs. Frances Wright, afterwards known as Madame D'Arusmont, was a Scottish lady distinguished in the same way. Yet this did not prevent the editor from introducing into it a paragraph concerning the Anti-man Society at Maine calculated to bring a cause, which had few friends then, into contempt. The editor was one of that class who meant well and had little other capacity. To the honour of co-operators, they always and everywhere were friendly to the equal civil rights of women. The subject is never obtruded and is never long absent. It continually recurs as though women were an equal part of the human family and were naturally included in Co-operation. Mr. J. S. Mill frequented their meetings and knew their literature well, and must have listened in his youth to speculations which he subsequently illustrated to so much effect in his intrepid book, "Subjection of Women."

This journal, however, had substantial merits. It had spaciousness of view as to the organisation of industry, and published thoughtful and practical papers thereon. It had cultivated correspondents who knew how to interest the reader and were not merely useful and dreary. One gave an account of one of Mr. Owen's meetings at the London Tavern. The large tavern hall was crowded. Proceedings were delayed in order that adversaries might elect a chairman of their own. Mr. Owen quietly put it to the meeting whether, as was his custom, he should conduct his own meeting, or whether a stranger should occupy the chair. Hands were held up. It was Owen against the field. The enemy was abundantly beaten. "I have," said a religious advocate present, "often argued with Mr. Owen, but the misfortune is, I can never get him into a temper nor keep myself out of one." Mr. Owen read an address two hours and a half long. The most devoted admirer could not help trying to count the awful pile of pages in the speaker's hands, to estimate when the hearer would be

out of his misery. No House of Commons—no university assembly—no church meeting—would have borne such an infliction. Yet the audience kept peace. When the end did come, a fury took possession of the adversaries. A Presbyterian minister rushed to the platform. As he lifted up his Calvinistic voice he became aware that the Rev. Robert Taylor, who had taken upon himself the unpleasant name of "The Devil's Chaplain," stood next to him, and close to him. The Rev. Presbyterian Pharisee pushed back with his stick the Chaplain of Lucifer. The meeting understood it. It was: "Stand off, I am holier than thou." Gentlemen would consider the act an insult—a magistrate an assault—Taylor did neither, but bowed and retired a little. The meeting applauded the dignified rebuke. In due course Taylor came forward of his own right to reply. As he had wantonly caused himself to be known by a distasteful name, he was not welcome on his own account, and had a bad time of it. One evangelical lady spoke against hearing him with a volubility which showed how valuable she would have been had she lived in the days of the building of Babel. Her tongue alone would have confounded the builders better than the multiplication of languages, and saved the labour of Latin and Greek and other miseries of scholarship entailed upon us. A description of what followed, by an eye-witness, is given in the *British Co-operator*.

"Taylor at length obtained a hearing. His figure is good, his appearance prepossessing, his dress affected, though not as I had been taught to expect—eccentric. His language was florid and highly wrought, his sentences abounding in figures of speech and closing in well-formed and generally pungent periods. He was elaborate, yet fluent, with much of the trickery of eloquence, much, too, of the soundness of reflection. His gesture was appropriate to his diction, both were too highly finished. It was acting, the acting of the theatrical performer, not on the stage but before the looking-glass. It was the elegant play of the sword fencer in his practice, brilliant and dazzling, it wanted the earnestness, the ardour, the recklessness of the combatants. In short, it was more the rehearsal of the orator than the oration itself. In the midst of affectation, the greatest and the most faulty, was that (next after the display of the diamond on his little finger)



which tempted him to quotations from the learned languages. To speak Latin to an audience in the city of London was certainly out of keeping.

"The attention of the meeting was now drawn to an object equally worthy of attention, another apostle for the cause he had espoused. It was the celebrated Henry Hunt, the Radical reformer, standing on a chair near the centre of the room, with head erect, his short white hair mantling over his florid countenance, his coat thrown open, and his right hand fixed on his side, in the resolute attitude of determined self-possession. I could see in a moment why it was he ever secured an ascendancy over the wills of those whom he is in the habit of addressing. He was Old England personified, and his very figure spoke for him to English hearts. On his appearance the clamour broke out afresh, for there was a strong expression of disapprobation testified in some parts of the room against him. But he was not to be daunted; like the true English mastiff, he held his grip; John Bull might bellow, fret, and foam, but he was not to be shaken off. 'Gentlemen'—'down, down,' on one side, 'Go up, go up,' on the other. Still he was fixed and immovable.—'Gentlemen, if you will but allow me to speak, I will tell you why I will not go up.'—'Bravo, Hunt.' 'I went up and was turned down again.' Mr. Owen apologised to him, explained the mistake, and requested him to go up to the gallery. 'No,' replied the sturdy orator, 'I am not one of your puppets, to be moved up and down at your pleasure.' Mr. Owen on his side was as determined, though not so sturdy. 'Mr. Hunt, I do not hear you well, and as I would be sorry to lose anything of what you say, whether it be for or against my propositions, you will oblige me by coming up.' Good temper is Mr. Owen's distinguishing attribute, never was it displayed in a more amiable, effective manner. The stern rigidity of Hunt's features instantly relaxed, he testified his assent by a good-hearted nod, descended from his self-selected point of elevation, was by Owen's side, and commenced a harangue by declaring his strong sense of the claims which that gentleman had on the public attention, and his respect for the philanthropy of his views, and for his perseverance in pressing them on through good and evil report."

In those days the *Birmingham Co-operative Herald* existed.

The storekeeper appears to have been an object of solicitude to it. Mr. Pare was afraid that the society would become dependent upon one man, and urged that all members should become in rotation committee men, so that there might be sufficient knowledge of the affairs of the society in as many hands as would enable them to change any principal officer without arresting the progress of the society. This was provided for in the Assington co-operative farms, devised a few years later. Every shareholder is a "steward" or member of the committee in turn.

A subject discussed and not settled at the Bolton Congress of 1872, was discussed with great force by Mr. Pare in 1830, that was the permanence of share capital, and the necessity, not merely the advantage, but the necessity, of treating co-operative capital like joint-stock, railroad, and canal company capital, and not compelling the directors of a store to give members the value of their share on withdrawing from the concern. Mr. Pare urged this in his Liverpool lectures, and carried his advice as far as Gatacre, a village six miles from Liverpool, where Lady Noel Byrom had, at that early period, suggested the formation of a co-operative store. Though living herself in another part of the kingdom, her solicitude for social progress was communicated to her correspondents.

Mr. Pare, who was called the first Co-operative Missionary, that being the title applied to him in the *British Co-operator*, rendered in the friendly papers of the day frequent, modest, and always interesting accounts of his tours, and his narrative is very interesting to follow, as it alone records the dates when Co-operation was first preached in some of the chief towns of England. From Liverpool Mr. Pare proceeded to Lancaster. Going in search of the mayor of that day to obtain from him the use of a public hall, he found him at the County Lunatic Asylum, which struck Mr. Pare as being a place so superior to the comfortless lodgings and cottages of mechanics and farm hands, that he thought there were considerable advantages in being mad. The mayor, however, proved to be as much demented as many of the inmates, for he disliked Co-operation, lest its funds, which did not exist, should be applied to support workmen in case of a turn-out against their employers. By other means Mr. Pare obtained a building to speak in, and

though his posters were up only four hours before his lecture, more persons came than could get in, being from two to three hundred in number. He next addressed, in Blackburn, about three hundred auditors. He was informed that there were at least twenty-six societies in this town and its immediate vicinity. The industrial ground was good in those days, for the co-operative seed sprang up fruitful everywhere. The condition of the bulk of the inhabitants he saw there is worth remembering. He beheld thousands of human beings pining with hunger, in rags, with little or no shelter for their emaciated bodies, and who had to beg to be allowed to work to obtain even these miserable conditions of existence. His next visit was to Bolton, where he lectured in the Sessions Room to about four hundred persons. On this visit he was entertained by the Rev. F. Baker, who had preceded him in delivering two lectures on Co-operation in the Mechanics' Institute of that town.

Some of the leading men of the city of Chester attended a lecture delivered by Mr. Pare on the 17th of March. A co-operative society existed then in Chester, consisting of seventeen members, who were making arrangements to supply all the co-operative societies in the kingdom with prime cheese at low prices. The Chester men seemed desirous of getting at the bottom of the subject, for they put questions to Mr. Pare which caused his lecture to extend over four hours. At this period Mr. James Watson was known as one of the store-keepers of the first London co-operative society, 36, Red Lion Square, and afterwards Jerusalem Passage, Clerkenwell. Mr. Lovett was his successor. On making a journey to Yorkshire, Mr. Watson was requested to act as a co-operative missionary, and he was furnished with tracts for distribution and the necessary credentials. Mr. Watson was an earnest and forcible speaker, who knew how to unite boldness of sentiment with moderation of manner. When Richard Carlile's shopmen were being imprisoned, beyond the rate of metropolitan supply, Mr. Watson was one, of many others, public-spirited young men, who volunteered to supply the place of those imprisoned. He took his place at Mr. Carlile's counter, and also in prison when his turn came. He was incarcerated three times through his participation in public



movements, and for periods of unpleasant length. He ultimately became one of the three famous Radical publishers (Watson, Hetherington, and Cleave), whose names were known all over the country, as leaders of the Unstamped publication movement. Mr. Watson remained in business until the opening of the Fleet Street House in 1854, when his business was purchased by the present writer. He maintained all his life a reputation for principle and integrity, and was held in personal esteem by the leading Radical members of Parliament from the days of the drafting of the People's Charter to the time of his death in 1874. Both as publisher and advocate, he always ranked as one of Mr. Owen's most practical disciples.

It was reported (in 1830) that a co-operative society was being formed at Marseilles, south of France, on the original social principle that the character of man is formed for and not by him; Mr. Hamilton, of Dalzell, appears to have carried this doctrine there. Persons wishing information about it were to apply to M. Boinet, Boulevard du Musée, No. 7, A.D., who would be at home from seven to eight in the morning for that purpose. Propagandism begins early in the day in France.

The *Newry Telegraph* reported two fervid speeches on Co-operation, by Edward Gardener and John Stevenson, made at the annual dinner of the Armagh Benevolent Society, held in the Market House, January 7, 1830. Ireland has always been favourable to Mr. Owen's views, and received him well long after England had grown angry at his apparent heresies.

A Metropolitan Co-operative Book Society was formed, which met in 19, Greville Street. In the absence of P. O. Skene, of Lewes, the chair was taken by W. Ellis. The society had in view to establish reading-rooms and libraries. This Mr. Ellis is the gentleman mentioned by Mr. J. S. Mill in his autobiography, as an early friend and associate of his, and to whom the metropolis was subsequently indebted for the Birkbeck Secular schools founded by his generosity, and directed by his trained judgment.

In October, 1830, the magazine before mentioned was published once a fortnight by Strangs, of Paternoster Row, and sold by co-operative storekeepers. It bore the double title of Magazine of Useful Knowledge, and Co-operative Miscellany. It took for its motto this premature sentence,

"Learning has declared war against Ignorance." It had done nothing of the kind, but was only airing itself before a larger multitude with Latin quotations—and with Greek ones, where the printer happened to have that type. Many long years elapsed before Learning attempted any war against Ignorance. The first speech reported in co-operative journals of Mr. Henry Hetherington's appeared in No. 3 of this magazine.

The first number of the *Miscellany* had to tell of a Rev. Mr. Pope, of Tunbridge Wells, who had "proved Co-operation to be totally inconsistent with the Gospel." It is fair to mention that about this period, one Rev. F. Baker, the same who entertained Mr. Pare at Bolton, appeared as an advocate of Co-operation, and published a periodical which had reached forty-three numbers in 1830, and was sold at one penny. But clerical dissentients were, however, never wanting.

After the Birmingham Political Union "was hung up," as Mr. Muntz expressed it, "like a clean gun"—and never taken down again, John Collins became known as a Chartist speaker. He was a man of some force and earnestness, but not otherwise distinguished for power. It was to his credit that he assented to that form of progress which was to be advanced by instruction rather than by force, which Chartism began to rely upon. Mr. Collins and I used to go to Harborne together, a little village some four miles from Birmingham, only famous because Thomas Attwood, the founder of the Political Union, had a seat there. Our object was to teach in a school in a little Pædobaptist Chapel. Heaven, I hope, knew what Pædobaptist meant. I did not. I was quite a youth then, and sometimes Collins used to take me by the hand as I got over the long walk badly. I remember when the sermon, which followed the school teaching, was much protracted, I used to long for dinner-time to come. I see now the humble cottage, belonging to a deacon, to which I went, in which the fire grate was very spacious, and the fire nearly invisible. I used to sit very close to it looking at the snow in the garden, which at that time covered the ground, as I ate my dinner off my knees, which usually consisted of a cold mutton chop, which my mother had thoughtfully provided, lest that article should not be prevalent in the cottage, and her dear solicitude

was quite prophetic. John Collins came to know much of Co-operation and to take interest in it. He was imprisoned two years in Warwick Gaol with Mr. Lovett, as has been said.

The impression that Co-operation was making upon politicians was set forth in striking terms in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.<sup>1</sup> The gravity of the estimate made, shows that the new industrial views were recognised as a moving force of the time, as in that quarter no undue importance would be accorded to them. The writer said: "Difficult as it is to force upon the attention of those who live in continual plenty and immoral indulgence, the severe distress of others, whom it is a trouble to them to think of, yet they can hardly be blind to the necessity of acting in a matter, which the people themselves have taken up in a way extremely novel in this country, and dangerous, or the contrary, according as the Legislature may make it. Multitudes of the common people now see clearly the state they are placed in. They perceive that their labour is valuable, if they had the means of applying it; but as their former masters have no use for it, they are driven to see whether they cannot use it for their own advantage. Those who have the virtues of thrift and patience are forming themselves into societies for the purpose of enjoying the benefit of their mutual labour; and it is impossible to look at their virtuous endeavours, to substitute comfortable competence for the horrors of dependence upon precarious employment by masters, without wishing them God-speed."

These words were evidently intended to influence those who influence affairs, and are of interest and moment still.

The last fruits of the enthusiastic period was the invention of congresses. Indeed, from 1829, and for six years after, Co-operation may be said to have lived on congresses. Heretofore such assemblies were called "Conferences." It was Mr. Pare who introduced the American term "congress," to distinguish social from political proceedings, which were known as conferences. In America, congress implied a political parliament. Mr. Pare held that he brought the term into English notice by the frequent use co-operators made of it.

<sup>1</sup> No. 161. January, 1830.



The first co-operative congress was held in Manchester, in May, 1830. There were delegates present from fifty-six societies, representing upwards of three thousand members, who had, by small weekly contributions and trading on co-operative principles, accumulated a capital of £6,000 in less than fifteen months.

Mr. Place has preserved a copy of the *United Trades' Co-operative Journal*, issued in 1830, in Manchester. Its price was twopence. It was printed on the best paper with the greatest typographical clearness, and contained the soberest and most intelligent writing of all the journals of this period started to represent Co-operation. The anecdotes selected were in good taste. It admitted nothing which was silly or uninteresting. Many of its quotations were selected with such judgment and knowledge that their literary interest is unabated to this day, and would be well worth reproducing. Even its original poetry was endurable, which was very rarely the case in these publications. Once in making a quotation from the *Guardian* newspaper, which it felt justified in contradicting, it suffered its correspondent who wrote upon the subject to entitle the paragraph in question, "Falsehoods of the *Manchester Guardian*." To charge a journalist with lying, because he took a different view of the condition of the operatives, was indefensible. Mr. Taylor, the editor of the *Guardian*, was himself a man of honour, but had it been otherwise it was quite sufficient to show that a writer was wrong without calling in question his veracity. This *United Trades' Journal* rendered a great service by publishing a summary of the rules in force in various co-operative societies in the kingdom—an act of thoughtfulness and labour, and one that shows that the enthusiastic period was not devoid of sagacity. To this day these rules are instructive. They marked the towns, chiefly Brighton and London, Worthing, Belper, and Birmingham, where these rules were known to be adopted. They are worthy the attention of co-operative societies now, as showing the care that early societies took to secure character, confidence, education, co-operative knowledge, and self-helping habits in their members. The following are some of the more notable rules:—

Loans of capital to the society by its own members shall

bear an interest of £5 per £100, and are not returnable without six months' notice.

In the purchase and sale of goods credit shall neither be given nor received.

Every member agrees to deal at the store of the society for those articles of daily use, which are laid in of suitable quality and sold at fair ready-money prices.

All disputes among members on the affairs of the society are to be settled by arbitration.

Any member misbehaving may be expelled by vote of the majority of members at a quarterly meeting.

No husband shall be admitted a member without his wife's appearing before the committee and expressing her consent.

A man is not eligible to be a member unless he can read and write ; and in general he must produce a specimen of his work.

No member is eligible for this committee until six months after admission to the society.

The preface to the *Co-operative Miscellany* of 1830 stated that there were then upwards of 20,000 persons united in different parts of the kingdom.

The number of societies spread over England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland were estimated by the British Association as being 266 in 1830. The members of the British Co-operative Association itself numbered 639. The enthusiasm with which Co-operation continued to be regarded was manifest by the statement in the *British Co-operator*, that in the last quarter of the year 53 societies had been formed.

When William Thompson wrote his *Practical Directions* for forming Communities in 1830, he stated there were nearly 300 co-operative societies of the industrial classes associated through England, Scotland, and Ireland. He spoke of two grand experiments instituted in 1825, on the principles of co-operative industry, one at New Harmony, in the State of Indiana, America, and the other at Orbiston, near Glasgow ; and of others in different parts of the United States, particularly one at Kendal, in the State of Ohio, without any connection with Mr. Owen, other than that of friendly communications. It was in 1827, he says, that the people themselves took up

the idea of co-operative industry, and names William Bryen, one of the hard-working industrious classes, as the chief promoter in Brighton, Sussex, of a Trading Fund Association. Within three years of that period the combined efforts of Mr. Philip Skene, Mr. Vesey, of Exeter, Mr. William Pare, of Birmingham, and other friends of co-operative industry, united with Mr. Bryen, led to more than eighty associations on similar principles being formed in different parts of England. He relates that the first Brighton association had accumulated funds sufficient to take a small piece of land, of twenty or thirty acres, and others had commenced the manufacture of cotton and stockings. The Brighton society published every month a periodical called the *Co-operator*, while the Birmingham society issued the *Co-operative Herald*.

We have this year (1830) an announcement of the first co-operative manufacturing community in London. The object appears to be to give employment to members. A committee was appointed to superintend the manufacture of brushes. They were to be sent to the Co-operative Bazaar, 19, Greville Street, where goods manufactured by other co-operative societies were purchased for sale. Co-operators in Burslem were sending up orders for co-operative handkerchiefs, stockings, galloons, and such things as were likely to be sold among poor people. The British Co-operative Association had the management of the arrangements, and they opened their bazaar from two to three o'clock daily. The terms on which goods were admitted were these: "The carriage of goods paid; the wholesale and retail prices fixed and attached to the articles, with an invoice, specifying the quantity, qualities, and kind of each article, which might be sent on sale, or returnable if not sold. The money derived from sales, subject to a deduction of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., will be paid to the society through which the goods have been sent. At such times as the proceeds of the bazaar management exceed the expenses, a dividend will be made to the sender of goods previously sold."

A list was published of seventeen societies, which in Manchester and Salford alone were formed between 1826 and 1830, bearing names like Masonic lodges, the "Benevolent," the "Friendly," the "Owenian," and others. But only the



last-named society was intending to commence manufacturing.

At that time (1830) a few co-operators in Manchester took 600 acres of waste land upon Chat Moss, and contrived to cultivate it. England had not a drearier spot in which to begin a new world. There was scarcely a thing for the eye to rest upon over a flat of several thousand acres. Railway surveyors had declared it impossible to make the Manchester and Liverpool line over it. Those who stepped upon it found it a black, wet sponge, which absorbed the pedestrian in it up to his knees. Horses who walked over it had to wear wooden pattens. It was literally a "Slough of Despond," but enthusiastic co-operators thought they could cultivate the millennium there. Co-operation had the soul of charity in it, and the apostolic virtue which hoped all things and believed all things.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE DEVICE OF LABOUR EXCHANGES

"The night is darkest before the morn ;  
When the pain is sorest the child is born."

KINGSLEY'S *Day of the Lord*.

So far as my reading or experience extends there is no example of a commercial movement so simple, necessary, and popular as the device of Labour Exchanges—exciting so wide an interest and dying so soon, and becoming so very dead. The exchange of labour meant really an exchange of commodities upon which labour had been expended. One plan was to take a large room, or series of rooms, where persons having articles they needed to part with could exchange them for others, or obtain a negotiable note for them. The first intimation in England of this new device of commerce of industry came from Mr. Owen. It appeared in the *Crisis* in the following form :—

23. Sat Aug 11  
1832 p 92

“NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC : EQUITABLE LABOUR EXCHANGES  
INSTITUTION OF THE INDUSTRIOUS CLASSES, GRAY’S  
INN ROAD, KING’S CROSS.

“Agriculturists, gardeners, manufacturers, provision merchants, factors, warehousemen, wholesale and retail dealers of all descriptions, mechanics, and all others, who may be inclined to dispose of their various articles of trade and merchandise in the only equitable manner in which men can mutually dispose of their property to each other, viz., its value in labour for equal value in labour, without the intervention of money, are requested to communicate with Mr. Samuel Austin, at the Equitable Labour Exchange.

“All letters must be post-paid—ROBERT OWEN.”

These bazaars were designed to enable artificers to exchange among themselves articles they had made, by which they would save the shopkeeper's expenses. For currency labour notes were substituted, which it was thought would represent real value. The shoemaker brought his pair of shoes to the bazaar, with an invoice of the cost (calculated at sixpence per hour). The labour note, of so many hours' value, was given to the shoemaker, who could then, or at any other time, buy with them any other deposit in the bazaar—a hat, or teakettle, or a joint of meat, if he found what he wanted. Upon each transaction a commission of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. was charged, in some bazaars payable in cash, to defray the expenses of the institution. In the exchanges conducted under Mr. Owen's auspices the commission charged was only one halfpenny in the shilling. In the published rules of the Equitable Labour Exchange, in Gray's Inn Road, in 1832, the name of Robert Owen appears as governor; and Thomas Allsop, Sampson Mordan, and W. Devonshire Saull, as members of council.

According to Mr. Noyes, Josiah Warren, in 1826, originated the idea of Labour Exchanges, which he communicated to Mr. Owen when he was a resident in Mr. Owen's community of New Harmony. After leaving New Harmony Mr. Warren went to Cincinnati, where he opened a Labour Exchange under the title of a Time Store. He joined in commencing a second one in Tascarawas, Co. Ohio; a third at Mount Vernon, Indiana. He opened a fourth in 1842, at New Harmony, to which he had returned. Mr. Owen alone gave effect to the plan in England, and by whom alone it was made known.

In May, 1833, the National Equitable Labour Exchange, London, was opened at noon on May-day with some pomp, at the new rooms in Charlotte Street, Rathbone Place, London. This place extended 250 feet from the front entrance in Charlotte-street, to John Street, at the back. In Charlotte Street it appeared to be no more than one of the usual private dwellings; but on passing through the entrance it opened unexpectedly into a quadrangular building of two stories, with a covered space in the centre of 16 ft. by 130 ft. Alterations were made in it to suit the convenience of the Labour Exchange and public meetings. Nearly 12,000 people were able to



stand in it under cover and hear a speaker with an ordinary voice—it could seat 3,700 persons. Mr. Owen convened the opening meeting “purposely to announce his determination to reject the system of error, by which society had been so long governed, and plant his standard of open and direct opposition to it.” He had done that sixteen years before, at the City of London Tavern; but that was a thing which would bear doing many times over. Society had a way of going on, regardless of the stand Mr. Owen made against it. Mr. Roebuck, M.P., was the chairman. The chief thing which he did was to make “known his conviction, that nothing would be done for the labouring classes unless they did it themselves.” Mr. Gillon, M.P., was also a speaker. Mr. Owen then gave his address.

Mr. Owen, as head of the London exchange, was publicly offered a hundred tons of the pink-eyed potatoes. It seemed an indignity that the correspondent of all the monarchs of Europe should be publicly engaged in considering tenders for pink-eyed potatoes. Sixpence was the uniform standard of value for each hour, adopted by Mr. W. King. He it was who was the editor of a *Gazette of Labour Exchanges*. The *Gazette* stated that the first Labour Bank was established at the Gothic Hall, New Road, Marylebone, in the month of April, 1832. The projector of the bank had no capital. Mr. Owen, who understood business, objected to this bazaar; as persons who had no property to indemnify the public from loss were unfitted for the work. The Bank of Labour had no capital at its back. It was to Mr. Owen's credit that when he judged the King scheme unsound he said so. Mr. King “wondered that he should find an opponent in the ‘universal philanthropist,’” evidently being of opinion that a philanthropist should approve of everything well intended, whether well devised or not. The projector thought enough to allege that he “was conscious of the purity of his intentions, and confident in the soundness of his principles”; but, as the “principles” had never been tried, and as “purity of intention,” however excellent in itself, is not capital in a commercial sense, and will buy nothing in the market, the exchange could not be expected to command confidence—yet it obtained it. Within twenty weeks deposits of the value of £3,500 were made.

In writing to the *Times* concerning the Labour Exchange Institution, Mr. Owen cited the great commercial organisation of the firm of James Morrison & Co. as an approach towards the change that he intended to effect in the distribution of common wealth among the people.

A United Interests Exchange Mart and Bank was projected, and premises taken for it in Aldersgate Street, a few yards south of the corner of Long Lane, consisting of a spacious front shop, with three other floors, each of nearly the same extent, for showrooms and exchange purposes. An exchange was opened in Sheffield, a town always venturesome in social things. But it was Birmingham that stood next to London in labour exchange fervour. Mr. Owen convened a congress in 1832 in Birmingham, at which delegates from various parts of the kingdom were invited, to discuss this new scheme of local commerce. The propagandism of it was in mighty hands, wont to strike the world in a large way. At once Mr. Owen held a great meeting in Birmingham, where he excited both enthusiasm and inquiry into the nature of co-operative plans generally. Mr. Thomas Attwood, himself then a man of national repute, with a natural affinity himself for men of spacious manners, introduced Mr. Owen, with many courtly phrases, to the council of the famous Birmingham Political Union, whom Mr. Owen addressed. He delivered lectures in the public office in Dee's Royal Hotel, Temple Row, which was largely attended by ladies; and in Beardsworth's Repository, which was attended by eight thousand people. Mr. G. F. Muntz was announced to preside. Mr. Owen's subject was "Labour Exchanges"; and Mr. Beardsworth, having an eye to business, offered to sell him the repository for a labour exchange mart. Mr. John Rabone, Mr. George Edmonds (one of the most ambitious orators of the Birmingham Political Union, and subsequently Clerk of the Peace of the town), Mr. Hawkes Smith, Mr. Pare, and others, addressed the great meeting at Beardsworth's.

Birmingham being distinguished among English towns for the variety of its small trades and miscellaneous industries, exchange of any kind came congenially. Journalism there soon showed itself interested in advancing the idea. A special *Labour Exchange Gazette* was started, and on July 29, 1833,

the National Equitable Labour Exchange was opened in Coach Yard, Bull Street. Benjamin Woolfield, Esq., was the director, and Mr. James Lewes sub-director. The bankers were Spooners, Attwoods & Co. The first day the deposits were 18,000 hours, and the exchanges 900. Each day, for some time, the deposits increased, but the exchanges never exceeded one half. In August the association of depositors numbered 840. Coventry sent £30 worth of ribbons; but a much more saleable deposit was three hundredweight of good bacon, and one person undertook to take any number of well-manufactured Birmingham articles in exchange for the best Irish provisions. The capital upon which this exchange commenced was only £450, which the first three months realised a profit, clear of all rents, salaries, and other payments, of £262. By this time London was filled with the fame of the Labour Exchange Bazaar of Gray's Inn Road, which Mr. Owen had taken to accommodate the growing business which was arising around him beyond that which could be dealt with in the Charlotte Street Rooms. It was stated that in one week the deposits in the Gray's Inn Road bazaar amounted to little less than £10,000, and that if 4 per cent. out of the 8½ per cent. said to be then charged on those deposits were applied to the extension of exchanges, there would be a disposable accumulating fund of £400 weekly, or if the deposits and exchanges proceeded at that rate £28,000 per annum would arise for that purpose. "Over the water"—as the Surrey side of London was called—things went on swimmingly. The Labour Exchange Association was so active that in 1833 and '34 it published monthly reports of its proceedings, with carefully drawn up papers and speeches of members.

The astonishing number of deposits made in a short time, and the avidity with which exchanges were made, proved that a large amount of wealth remained stationary for the want of a market. No doubt numerous persons were stimulated by these exchanges to make articles of use and value, who before did nothing, because no means existed of disposing of them; and thus, by providing exchanges, new wealth was created. Mr. Owen strongly recommended the management of the exchange at Birmingham to be given to Mr. William Robert



Wood. Mr. Wood better understood the commercial possibilities of these Exchanges than any one else.<sup>1</sup> The cardinal point he insisted upon was, that each Exchange should be provided with quick, sound, practical valuers—not men muddled with labour-note ideas of sixpence per hour estimates—but who would know exactly what a thing would fetch in the market if it had to be sold out of doors. The labour of a second-rate shoemaker, or button maker, might not be worth sixpence an hour, while the labour of a skilful oculist might be worth 100 guineas. Who could appraise the value per hour of the chair painter and the landscape painter at the same sixpence? The Labour Exchange needed the pawnbroker's faculty of quickly seeing what a thing was worth. The exchange managers should have a clear eye to not giving more than could be obtained for an article if they had to sell it to a stranger. By giving more than the value obvious to the outsider, the labour notes are depreciated in value. If a man of business went into an exchange and saw persons depositing chimney ornaments and firescreens, and carrying out kettles, good hats, and sound pieces of bacon, he knew at once that things could not go on. Their rapid popularity showed that they really hit a general need, and sound management must make them profitable. At first, tradesmen around them readily agreed to take labour notes, and numerous placards were issued, and are still extant (preserved by Mr. Place),<sup>2</sup> giving this notice to the public. Of course these tradesmen took occasion to run round the exchange themselves, and see what kind of deposits represented the value of the notes. A weakness for "respectable" friends of the system caused in one case a whole family of shrewd, talkative professors of the "new views" to be put upon the directory of an exchange. These adroit managers did business with their friends and acquaintances,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wood remained persuaded of the utility of Labour Exchanges to the end of his days, and proposed to co-operate with me in establishing one. He became the leading dentist in Brighton and died at an advanced age. He became alderman, and his friend Mayall—the famous photographer—became mayor. Both were Huddersfield men. Brighton owed its public baths and other social improvements to Alderman Wood, to whom the memory of Owen was a constant inspiration.

<sup>2</sup> As many as three hundred tradesmen gave notice that the Labour Notes would be taken at their places of business, and in some cases the theatres made the same announcement—that Labour Notes would be taken at the doors.

who loaded the shelves with useless things appraised at a special rate, while valuable and saleable articles were carried away in exchange. Sharp shopkeepers sent down worthless stock in their shops, exchanged it for labour notes, and before the general public came in carried away the pick of the saleable things, with which they stocked their shops. As they put in their windows "Labour Notes taken here," they were thought wonderful friends of the exchange. With some of them the proper notice in the window would have been "Labour Exchangers taken in here." And these were the knaves who first began to depreciate Labour Notes and compare them to French assignats, and they well knew the reason why.<sup>1</sup> The popularity and even profit of the deposit business was such that it bore this. Then wholesale and general dealers systematically depreciated Labour Notes with a view to buy them up, which they did, and carried off all the saleable goods they could find at the exchange. These operators did not approve of the exchanges which appeared to threaten a new system of barter, and ingeniously devised means to discredit them and profit themselves in doing it. If Mr. Owen had otherwise chosen his officers in the central exchange the enemy might have been frustrated; but disinterestedness had become with him a second nature, and he took for granted the integrity of those who offered their services. When his suspicions were aroused no man could see more easily or farther into a rogue than he.

Mr. Owen rather regarded these exchanges as weak expedients of persons who thought that they could mend or mitigate a state of society which he considered should be peremptorily superseded; they had not the advantage of that strong direction. Facility and certainty of exchange is a condition not only of commerce but of production. Astute persons failed not to see that a wealth-making power resided in them. It was obvious if pawnbrokers—who received no money with deposits, but had to pay out capital for them and be debarred from realising upon articles taken in until a long period after, and then only when not redeemed—prospered, there was some probability that a

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand there were honest and favouring shopkeepers who took the notes with a view to promote their circulation as currency, and gave saleable goods for them, who found themselves unable to obtain a fair exchange at the bazaar, and thus they became victims of the exchange scheme.

company of labour brokers—who received cash with every deposit and paid no capital out for it, but merely gave a note for it and were at liberty to sell it the next hour—could make profit. There might have been a department where valuable articles of uncertain demand could be received on sale at the depositor's own price, to be paid for only when disposed of. Had the profits accruing been carried to the credit of customers in proportion to their dealings, as is now done in the co-operative stores, and the first five pounds of profit so gained by the exchanger capitalised to create a fund to stand at the back of the notes to prevent panic or depreciation, these Labour Exchanges might have continued, as they might now be revived.

At the Surrey branch in Blackfriars Road, which existed simultaneously with the Gray's Inn Road Exchange, the total deposits soon amounted to £32,000, and the exchanges to £16,000.

Mechanical inventions, steam engines, steamships, and projected railways had changed the character of industry before men's eyes. Dr. Church was known to be running about Birmingham on a steel horse. Though some of his patients were more alarmed at his untoward steed, he made a favourable impression upon the popular imagination. The novelty of change disposed many to believe that the new discovery in barter was the very supplement of industry wanted, and that its uses and benefits would be indefinite. Their progress was marvellous, and their first discouragement came, not from the enemy but from friends. They were the disciples of the world-makers who helped, in their mournful, misgiving way, to bring the scheme down. They regarded these exchanges as an expedient for diverging from the straight road which led to the new world. Mr. Gray says: "They proved entirely delusive, as all attempts to graft a new system upon the old must be, without any corresponding change of principles and habits of action"; whereas it was a merit of this scheme that it required no change of principle and very little habit of action. It was their success and profit becoming obvious to untheoretical eyes that led finally to their ruin. The Jewish proprietor of Gray's Inn Road saw that good commercial results could be derived from them and conspired to obtain



them himself. But the enthusiasm which Mr. Owen had created, and which allured the public to any scheme with which he was connected at that time, was wanting to the new proprietor. He had taken a shop without being able to secure to himself what in England is called the goodwill of the business.

In January, 1834, the Labour Exchange in Gray's Inn Road was broken up by violence. The proprietor, Mr. Bromley, having had his building empty in 1831 for four months, artfully placed the keys in Mr. Owen's unsuspecting hands, to do what he pleased with it, he relinquishing any claim to rent till 1832. Nothing was to be paid for the fixtures. Mr. Owen accepted the arrangement without any schedule of fixtures or any definite agreement as to terms and tenure of future tenancy. Had the place gone on indifferently, Mr. Bromley would have been very glad for such rent as Mr. Owen would have paid him. For a year and a half Mr. Owen used the place as the grand central institution for promulgating his system. Lectures were delivered there on Sundays and other days. Great festive celebrations were held; and many of the most eminent men of that day and of subsequent years were among the occasional frequenters of the meetings. Trade unionists, social, political, religious, and philanthropic reformers of all schools, found welcome and hearing there. No opinion, Tory, Radical, or religious, and no want of opinion, was a bar to friendliness and aid, provided the object was one intended to benefit the public. It was taking the Labour Exchange there that brought the Institution (of which London never had the like before or since) to an end. When Mr. Bromley saw the exchange succeed he took steps to obtain possession of the place, as he was satisfied Mr. Owen had discovered a mode of making money which was unknown to Mr. Bromley. One of his modest proposals, then, was that Mr. Owen should buy the whole institution at £17,000. Then he demanded that the fixtures should be paid for, which had never been estimated at more than £700. He, however, made a demand for £1,100; and, to prevent dispute, or unpleasantness, Mr. Owen paid him £700 out of his own pocket. It was ultimately arranged that the premises should be given up, as the directors of the exchange refused to take any further lease of the premises at

the rental asked, which was £1,700 a year. Mr. Bromley, however, was so impatient of re-possession that he did not wait even for their leaving, but procured a mob of men and broke into the place, and let in sixty-four ruffians (the exact number of the gang was set down), who smashed the secretary's doors in, took possession of the fixtures belonging to the exchange, and turned the directors into the street. The police were called, some of the rioters were taken before the magistrates, and the same discredit occurred as though Mr. Owen had not paid the £700. Of course there was a remedy in law against Mr. Bromley, but the directors were too lenient to enforce it, and they were content to open a new bazaar in the Surrey Institution, Blackfriars Road. Notwithstanding the excitement and mischievous knowledge the public had that the Gray's Inn Road place might be peremptorily closed, the amount of deposits on the last day it was opened was 6,915 hours, and the exchanges 5,850, so that the directors continued to do business to the last day at the rate of more than £50,000 a year. The lowest rent Mr. Bromley would agree to accept as a condition of their remaining was £1,400, and the rates and taxes amounted to about £300 more, making a yearly outgoing of £1,700. The business of the exchange was clearly likely to bear this; Mr. Bromley became so satisfied on this point, was so impatient to get possession, that, rather than wait a week or two for the convenience of removal, he resorted to force, and immediately issued a placard announcing that "The whole of the splendid and capacious premises, Gray's Inn Road, will be occupied in future by the National Land and Equitable Labour Exchange Company. The present occupants will close their proceedings this week, and the National Land and Equitable Labour Exchange Company will commence receiving deposits on Wednesday morning next, the 16th instant, at ten o'clock, and continue daily at the same hour; and the company's exchange stores will be opened to the public on Monday, the 21st of January, 1833; after which day the company will be ready to receive proposals for the occupation of land lying at convenient distances from the metropolis, or on the land of the intended railroad from Birmingham to King's Cross."

Here was a well-laid scheme, which was really a tribute to

the value of exchanges. This practical man, unembarrassed by any scruples, thought that if the plan succeeded so well when weighed with Mr. Owen's unpopular principles, the world would flock to the same standard when a neutral flag was displayed. He, however, overlooked that outrage, though it sometimes succeeds, is often a dangerous foundation to build upon. Mr. Owen's disciples were not all philosophers—they were human enough to feel rage, and numerous and powerful enough to make their indignation felt; and they spoke so unpleasantly of the new project and its ingenious projector, that he got few exchanges, and lost his good tenants without getting any other. He found he had not only alienated those who had made the exchange system popular; he had alarmed the public by the spectacle of violence, police cases, and failure. The National Company fell into well-earned contempt and distrust, and the Gray's Inn Road buildings became an obscure, woebegone, deserted, unprofitable holding.<sup>1</sup> No doubt, Labour Exchanges died there. Had Mr. Owen's friends been self-denying, stilled their hatchet tongues, and have promoted the success of the Equitable Exchange, the cause might have been saved. They did not comprehend that steam was not a failure, though a thousand experiments broke down before a single steamship sailed or railway car ran; that new medicines as often kill people as cure them before cautious, patient, experimental physicians discover the right way of administering them. Yet no one decries the curative art. But in social devices the first scoundrel or the first fool—the first thief or the first blunderer, who by over-confidence, fraud, or ignorance brings a scheme to immediate grief, sets the world against it for generations, and journalists evermore speak of it as that "abortive failure which was tried long ago and brought ruin and ignominy upon all concerned."

<sup>1</sup> The original correspondence on this subject and the statements and letters of Mr. Bromley to Mr. Owen, are now in the possession of The Owen Memorial Committee of Manchester.

17. Owen to Bromley  
18. Bromley to Owen  
19. Owen to Bromley  
20. Bromley to Owen

21. Owen to Bromley  
22. Bromley to Owen



## CHAPTER IX

## THE SOCIALISTIC PERIOD. 1831-1844

"Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world  
Like one great garden showed,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,  
Rare sunshine flow'd."—TENNYSON.

For thirteen years now Co-operation has to be traced through Socialism. Store keeping had in many cases failed, and, where successful, its profits were insufficient to pave the way to the new world, much less defray the costs of that rather extensive erection. Grand schemes were revived, in which idleness and vice, silliness and poverty were to cease by mutual arrangement. This state of things came to bear the name of Socialism.

Social and co-operative literature has not been very brilliant. Robert Dale Owen was incomparably the best writer of the early period. William Hawkes Smith, of Birmingham, had an animated readable style. Mr. Minter Morgan had literary ambition. In this period the working-men writers were often eloquent by impulse and passion. They told their story oftentimes with verbose energy. There were frequent instances of wit and humour in their platform arguments. But their writing was best endurable to persons of the same way of thinking, to whom earnestness was eloquence, and to whom any argument in which they agreed seemed witty. Any man who stood up manfully for opinions, at which society scowled, seemed admirable, and was admirable in doing it; and by those who thought that deliverance from precariousness lay that way, no art save sincerity was esteemed.

Englishmen, as a rule, get so few large ideas that when one

makes its way into their mind, whether political, religious, or social, they go mad about it for the first few years. They see nothing but that. Everything else in the world is obscure to them ; and they believe that their route is the high-road to the millennium. No Co-operators arose who had the pen of Bunyan, the Bedford tinker.

Many books were published without any date, or any allusion by which a person unacquainted with the time could determine when they were issued. So important a book as William Thompson's "Practical Directions for the Establishment of Communities" merely contains an incidental date which suggests rather than tells when it appeared. All these authors thought they were commencing a new world, and that their works would be known and issued at the beginning of things. Even Robert Fellowes, B.A., Oxon, who published an address to the people in 1799, on the "Genius of Democracy," was not well served by the printer, who made him say that "Nelson's victory on the Nile had lain the *posterity* of France in the dust." That would have been a famous achievement and saved Europe much trouble. Posterity ought to have been prosperity. Huber states that some ants are subject to a peculiar malady, which, after being once seized with it, prevents them moving any more in a straight line. There are a great many writers who are subject to this disease, who not only move, but reason deviously, and never arrive at the point of their meaning. Ant writers of this description overrun socialist literature.

With the close of 1830 periodicals representing Co-operation appear to cease. Few, if any, reached 1831. No new ones were announced in London for that year, and no trace of any remain. Another form of activity commenced. As 1830 was the year of journals, 1831 was the year of congresses. The fervour of the five years from 1826 to 1830 stimulated action, and then ceased to direct it. Societies popular in conception can hardly become so in practice, or be largely sustained without the animation and counsel which well-contrived periodicals supply. None could advertise or pay for competent editorship or competent contributors. It comes to pass that journals written by charity come to be read only by charity. At length, in 1832, Mr. Owen entered the field of weekly journalism himself, and issued a much larger paper than had

ever before appeared, purporting to represent Co-operation. Of course it must bear a momentous title if Mr. Owen had anything to do with it, and accordingly it was named The Crisis. The poor are always in a crisis, and rich and poor in that year were rather better off in this respect than they had been for a long time. There was a profitable crisis approaching of some importance, for the Reform Bill was near, but this did not concern Mr. Owen, and it was scarcely mentioned in the volume edited by him. The French Revolution had occurred two years previously, and Mr. Owen narrowly escaped being shot in it; but as Louis Philippe was not a believer in the "new views," Mr. Owen made no note of his deportation from France. It was the change from error and misery to truth and happiness, by the introduction of communistic plans, that was to constitute *the crisis*. Mr. Owen proposed to offer for the guidance of the affairs of men the heroic precept of "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, without mystery, mixture of error, or the fear of man"—which the world has certainly not seen yet. It was proof that social expectation in Owen was still great, that 12,000 copies were sold immediately *The Crisis* was out, and a second edition of 5,000 was issued.

In the meantime the provinces were busy with organs of associative opinion. After the first subsidence of Co-operative journals in London they arose in Lancashire, and were continued during 1831 and 1832 in a more practical way than in London, the price being mostly a penny, while in London they were published as sixpenny magazines, and, of course, only purchased by people who had sixpence to spare; while in the provinces Co-operation had become a matter of interest chiefly to workmen who had less to spare. Then in London and the south of England Co-operation was more sentimental, as though the warmer atmosphere rarefied it; while in the north it appeared as though the cold condensed it. In Lancashire and Yorkshire journals were more practical. Instead of theories about the happiness of the higher orders, the pages were filled with reports of societies actually in operation with accounts of their experience and profit to the "lower orders."

Monthly papers had hitherto been the rule, it being illegal then to publish news earlier than twenty-eight days old, unless the paper bore the newspaper stamp; which made it



impossible to issue a weekly paper which reported immediate proceedings. Long before the newspaper stamp was abolished considerable latitude had been allowed by the Government with respect to journals representing religious, scientific, or educational movements. It was impossible for the Stamp Office to make a restrictive definition of news. All weekly publications reporting any proceeding which gave immediate information came under the definition of a newspaper; and Mr. Owen's *Crisis* might have been put down at any time had any one called the attention of the law officers to it. Mr. Collett made this clear when he stopped Mr. Dickens' *Household Narrative of Current Events*, and brought the *Athenæum* within the operation of the law.

The *Lancashire Co-operator, or Useful Classes' Advocate*, as it with some judgment called itself, took for its motto this well-conceived improvement upon the half maxim, "Union is strength," namely—

"Numbers without union are powerless,  
And union without knowledge is useless."

This publication, edited by Mr. E. T. Craig, first appeared in September, 1831. It published addresses to Christian co-operators, who, however, could never be persuaded to take it. This journal was locally well received, and was sent out by the Manchester and Salford Co-operative Council. It was a small penny periodical, the expense of issuing which could scarcely have cost the members more than a farthing each, even if none had been sold. The editor showed great taste in selecting illustrative extracts. One was from Shipley, the Bishop of St. Asaph, which set forth that the art "of preventing insurrection is not to take from the people the power to resist, but to make it their interest to obey." The fifth number reported a co-operative tea-party, attended by about a hundred and thirty men and women, in Halifax. In September a successor to this little journal appeared under the title of *The Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator*, resembling its predecessor in every respect, with the addition only of the name of "Yorkshire." In those days adversaries were fond of describing Co-operation as an *ignis fatuus*. An article under that term—"Co-operation an *Ignis Fatuus*"—was written.

Fifty people read the title for one who read the article.<sup>1</sup> In the second number of this two-counties' journal Mr. B. Warden, an enthusiastic saddler, of Marylebone, addressed a communication to the "Eight Millions of Workpeople of the British Nation," though it was perfectly certain that eight hundred would never see it. The editor continued to make extracts from Bishop Shipley ; and, knowing that co-operators were esteemed latitudinarians in religion, because they were more scrupulous in believing only what they could give an account of in reason, he judiciously called attention to Bishop Shipley's wise saying : "I am not afraid of those tender and scrupulous consciences who are over-cautious of professing or believing too much. . . . I respect their integrity. The men I am afraid of are the men who believe everything, who subscribe everything, and vote for everything." These principleless evasionists overrun the country still and pass for respectable persons of irreproachable faith. This journal continued until February, 1832—writing to the last about Co-operation being an *ignis fatuus*. It, however, reappeared as a four-weekly organ. There was no halfpenny postage of publications in those days, and the editor intimated that the cost of carriage proved a barrier to its circulation, and the "Six Acts" prohibiting their giving news, such as reports of lectures or societies' meetings, oftener than once a month, they had determined to issue their journal in future monthly ; but whether the "Six Acts" frightened them from discovering the name of the month or year of issue did not transpire. The journal never contained the one or the other till, incidentally, in October, the month and year appeared. In its monthly form it was printed very prettily. It was in double columns, and the chief subjects of each page was printed at the head. The new series commenced by another address from Mr. B. Warden, "To the Eight Millions." Its last number appeared in November, and was entirely occupied with a report of the fourth Congress of delegates, which was held at Liverpool. That year Mr. T. Wayland, of Lincoln's Inn, published a work on the "Equalisation of Property and the Formation of Communities."

<sup>1</sup> The adversaries whose eyes fell on the suspicious title exclaimed : "We always said co-operators were under a delusion, and now they see it themselves."

The Congresses and their incidents will be more intelligible, perhaps, if related in the order of their succession. The first Congress was held in Manchester in 1830. The second Co-operative Congress was held in Birmingham in October, 1831, and for a season divided attention with the Reform Bill in that town. It met in commodious rooms in the Old Square. At this Congress, Rowland Detrosier was present, who had already distinguished himself by the possession of unusual scientific and political knowledge for one of his rank of life, and who had a voice, an energy, and an eloquence which was considered strikingly to resemble Brougham's.

Birmingham in those days was quite a centre of Co-operative inspiration. Here the first organised impulse was given to the formation of a band of missionaries. Here the Congress proposed to contribute to the capital of the *Voice of the People*, with a view to its becoming the accredited organ of the movement. Then there were no railways nor funds for coaches, and two of the delegates from Glasgow walked the whole distance, nearly 300 miles. Robert Owen and William Thompson were the chairmen of the Congress. In December of the following year a public meeting of 8,000 persons was held, lasting from eleven in the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon, consisting of small manufacturers, shopkeepers, operatives, and many ladies and persons of the wealthier classes. Mr. Owen said, in writing to his son Dale, that "in all his experience in Europe and America he had never witnessed so numerous and gratifying a meeting."<sup>1</sup>

The third Co-operative Congress, held in the Gray's Inn Road Institution, London, in 1832, was notable for many things. Further and more open attempts were made to promote political indifference among co-operators. Mr. Owen remarked that "despotic governments were frequently found to be better than those called democratic. In the countries where those governments existed the industrial classes were not found in such misery and destitution as in this country, and therefore on this ground there was no reason to dislike despotism. As far as the co-operative system was concerned, it was of no consequence whether governments were despotic or not."

<sup>1</sup> *Crisis*, No. 39, 1832.



Mr. Joseph Hume, M.P., who was a visitor to the Congress, at once challenged this fatal doctrine of political indifference. He said "he had himself been a co-operator, perhaps longer than most present. He was surprised to hear what had been said in reference to the character of governments. The English was not a democratic government. Though democratic in name, it was despotic in practice. In Austria and Constantinople despotism was exercised by one man. In England it was inflicted by many. He was surprised also that popular instruction was not urged in Mr. Owen's address. It was only by knowledge that the people could be freed from the trammels of bad laws and State religion." The number of persons attending this Congress were eight hundred on the day on which it assembled: certainly showing great popular interest in the proceedings. The new project of Labour Exchanges was that which was uppermost in the minds of the public, both at the Birmingham Congress and at this great one in London.

The first number of the *Crisis*, before mentioned, announced this Co-operative Congress of the associations in Great Britain and Ireland, and the societies were admonished "to choose men capable of having their minds elevated, and of such moral courage and singleness of purpose that the passions of men should not be able to turn them from the godlike course which they will have to run." A delegate needed to have a good deal of courage to present himself at the Gray's Inn Road Congress, as a person likely to fulfil these high conditions, especially as all the members of Parliament were invited to meet the men of the "godlike" career. It is curious to observe all through the history of social and other reform how few leaders seemed to consider how far their language would be likely to excite the amusement, rather than the respect, of those who differ from them.

Mr. Pare reported "the absence of Mr. Portman, M.P.; Mr. Hughes, M.P. [there was a Mr. Hughes, M.P., favourable to Co-operation in that day]. Mr. Slaney, M.P., had agreed to support a petition; but neither Lord Brougham nor Mr. O'Connell, who were to present it, ever did so, or even acknowledged its receipt"—not worth telling, since it gave the public the idea that those honourable members did not

think much of the Congress—the probability being that both gentlemen were overwhelmed with more applications than they could attend to, or even write to say so. Lord Boston sent a letter to the Congress.<sup>1</sup>

Three members of Parliament—Mr. Hume, Mr. Mackinnon, and Mr. James Johnson—appear to have been present. Mr. Owen presided. The names best known to co-operative history of the delegates who attended were Dr. Wade, who afterwards wrote a history of the working class; William Lovett, honourably known subsequently for his advocacy of educational Chartism; Mr. John Finch, a Liverpool iron merchant, a famous advocate of temperance, and a man of great earnestness—a religious man with great capacity for making Socialism disagreeable to religious people; Mr. William Pare, of Birmingham; Mr. Joseph Smith, of Salford; James Watson, B. Cousins, John Cleave, and the Rev. Thomas Macconnell, a ready and powerful speaker, not known subsequently to much advantage. Mr. Hume came in the course of the Congress, and, as we have seen, took part in the proceedings—the report of which was made and edited on the order of the Congress, by William Carpenter, a famous name among the reformers of that day as the author of “Political Letters,” and many publications which still live in political recollection. The motto of the political tracts published by William Carpenter was: “Every man for every man, himself included”—a co-operative device in which it was provided that the individual should not lose sight of himself. In other respects this was a remarkable Congress. It adopted a wise and much-needed resolution upon which nobody acted, which, however, was ordered to be the standing motto of the society, to be printed with all publications regarded as official, issued by the co-operative body. It was this:

“Whereas, the co-operative world contains persons of all religious sects, and of all political parties, it is unanimously resolved—that co-operators *as such* are not identified with any religious, irreligious, or political tenets whatever; neither those of Mr. Owen nor any other individual.”

This resolution was brought forward by Mr. Owen, and showed good sense on his part. It was, however, impracti-

<sup>1</sup> *Crisis*, May 5, 1832.

cable since the principles of Co-operation as explained by him, and accepted by co-operators, did contradict the popular belief of the day as respects the unwillfulness of sin, the unjustifiableness of punishment (except as a means of deterring others), the power of influencing character by well-devised material conditions. No resolution could establish neutrality in a party whose principles committed it to dissent from the popular theology.

At this Congress the United Kingdom was divided into nine missionary districts, with a council and secretary for each. 1. The Metropolis; 2. Birmingham; 3. Manchester; 4. Glasgow; 5. Belfast; 6. Dublin; 7. Cork; 8. Edinburgh; 9. Norwich. The "old immoral world" was to be assaulted at many points.

At this Congress a circular was sent to all the societies, "Regulations for Co-operative Societies" :—

"1. Let it be universally understood, that the grand ultimate object of all co-operative societies, whether engaged in trading, manufacturing, or agricultural pursuits, *is community in land.*

"2. To effect this purpose, a weekly subscription, either in money, goods, or labour, from a penny to any other amount agreed upon, is indispensably necessary to be continued from year to year, until a capital sufficient to accomplish the object of the society be accumulated."

The majority of co-operators had formed stores and established numerous manufacturing societies for the mutual advantage of the members. Many friends, among the middle and upper classes, had established co-operative stores, and had advanced capital to start them, from a kindly regard to the welfare of the members, sometimes to improve their social habits and train them in economy; and sometimes with the view to control their social and religious views by their influence as patrons. As working men grew independent in spirit this patronage was now and then declined, and sometimes resented. England, Ireland, and Scotland were studded, England especially, in Yorkshire and Lancashire, with co-operative manufacturing and provision associations, similar in character but less opulent than those which we now know. Several of

\* This resolution led to co-operative stores being formed with a view to devote their profits to a fund for purchasing community land.



these stores were destroyed by success. The members for a time made money, but did not capitalise their profits, nor had they discovered the principle of dividing profits in proportion to purchases. The shareholders simply found success monotonous. Some betook themselves to other enterprises more adventurous. In some cases want of religious toleration broke up the society. Bad management ruined others. In possibly quite as many instances scoundrel managers extinguished the society. The law, as has been said, enabled a thief to plead that being a member of the society he only robbed himself, although he stole the shares of everybody else. The amendment of this state of things was not attempted until twenty years later, when lawyers joined the co-operative movement. Mr. E. Vansittart Neale, Mr. J. Malcolm Ludlow, Mr. Thomas Hughes, J. J. Furnival, and others, took Parliamentary action, and these crime-encouraging laws were ended.

Co-operators were invited to set out, like pilgrims, to the land of Beulah, where Acts of Parliament were unknown, or unnecessary. Of these dreams Mr. Pare spoke happily, and with the good sense from which English communists never departed. "It was true," he said, "they wished equality, but it was *voluntary* equality. It was true they were levellers, but they wished to level up and not down. They sought to create and retain fresh wealth for themselves." <sup>1</sup>

This Congress meant business, for, on Mr. Owen communicating that community land might be obtained if thought desirable, at Aylesbury, in Bucks, of four hundred acres, with one thousand acres adjoining, which he thought might also be had, he, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Bromley were appointed to inspect the estate, and a deputation was likewise appointed to wait upon Mr. Morgan, of the Stock Exchange, and endeavour to effect a loan of £250,000." <sup>2</sup>

The fourth Congress of delegates was held in Liverpool, October, 1832. So impatient and confident of progress were the co-operative communists becoming, that they held two Congresses in one year.

<sup>1</sup> *Crisis*, No. iv., 1832.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Third Co-operative Congress, 1832. Reported and Edited by order of the Congress by William Carpenter. It was a rule in those times always to have the Congress reported and edited by men of mark.

The fifth Co-operative Congress was held at Huddersfield in April, 1833, when a public meeting took place in the White Hart Inn, and one was held at Back Green, called by the town crier. Mr. Rigby's name appears for the first time at this Congress as a delegate from Manchester. It was stated that "numerous delegates from the various co-operative societies throughout the kingdom gave encouraging accounts of their progress, and that the societies in the West Riding of Yorkshire alone had accumulated a capital of £5,000, which was thought a great sum then in the north. It was at this Congress that the death of Mr. Thompson, of Cork, was announced by Mr. Owen, which was matter of deep regret to all social reformers. Mr. Stock, High Constable of Huddersfield, spoke at the White Hart meeting, and Mr. Owen moved a vote of thanks to their patriotic High Constable." Mr. W. R. Wood, of London, was appointed one of the secretaries of the Congress. "A provisional committee was appointed to immediately engage premises for a Labour Exchange." This Congress is described in the *Crisis* for May, 1833, as the sixth. In September of the same year the full report is reprinted as that of the "fifth Congress," which appears to be the right enumeration.

The sixth Congress was held at West End, Barnsley, March 31, 1834. It is not, so far as I can trace, even mentioned in the *Crisis*.

The seventh Congress recorded was held at Halifax, April 20, 1835. This was the last meeting of delegates from stores described as "a Co-operative Congress." This Halifax Congress was the end of the Co-operative Congress series. They lasted six years.

This year, 1835, the Association of All Classes was formed, and in May was held the first of the Socialist Congresses. It was not convened as a delegate Congress, but was open to all who cared to come. It was really the great meeting at which the A.A.C.A.N. [Association of All Classes of All Nations] was floated. The second Socialist Congress was convened at Burton Chapel, Burton-street, Burton Crescent, London. Its proceedings consisted of addresses and resolutions.

The third Socialist Congress was held in Manchester, May, 1837. It assembled in the Social Institution, Great George

Street, Salford. The Congress was intended to be, and is always described as the "Manchester" Congress.

The practical result of this Congress was the formation of a National Community Friendly Society. On the motion of Mr. Lloyd Jones, a Missionary and Tract Society was resolved on.

The chief things otherwise arranged were the enrolment of the society under the 10th George the Fourth, chap. 56, as amended by the 4th and 5th of William the Fourth, for the purpose of obtaining legal security for the funds of a society having in view the establishment of a system of united property, labour, and education among the members thereof. Mr. James Rigby, of Salford, and Alexander Campbell, of Glasgow, were appointed the permanent missionaries of the association, who were to receive instructions from the Central Board of the Home Department. The Foreign department announced was little heard of afterwards, though London was assigned as the seat of the foreign government. The main objects of all the resolutions, and departments, were founding communities of united interests. The fervour which prevailed at this period was indicated in an editorial article on "The Socialists' Campaign," in which it was pointed out that things would go on badly everywhere, "until 'The Book'—the Book of the New Moral World—shall be received and acknowledged as a guide, not simply to all parties, but to the entire family of human kind."

The second quarterly report, presented after the announcement of the Home and Foreign departments referred to, showed a total income of only £122 10s. 4d. A revenue of £500 a year certainly suggested that the world was going to be governed with a very moderate budget.

The fourth Socialist Congress was held in Manchester, May, 1838. Mr. F. Hollick was first appointed a missionary at this Congress. At the same meeting Messrs. William Clegg, John Finch, and Joseph Smith were instructed to seek an estate capable of accommodating five hundred persons. It adjourned to the 30th of July to Birmingham, where it met under the designation of a "Congress of Delegates of the National Community Friendly Society." Mr. Owen, the president, artfully read to the delegates an account of a council



of savages in the South Seas,<sup>1</sup> where throughout the whole of the proceedings no two persons had attempted to speak at the same time—no speaker had attempted to impugn the motives or opinions of the rest—but all had honourably confined themselves to the question before them—one of many instances in which savages are capable of teaching the civilised.

The two last-named associations—that of All Classes of All Nations and the National Community Society—made a proclamation at this Congress, and the “Outline of the Rational System of Society” was first issued then.

The fifth Congress of this series was held in Birmingham in May, 1839. Birmingham had become so influential a centre of Co-operation, that not only was the *New Moral World* printed and published in it, but the Central Boards of the two associations were established in Bennett’s Hill, and the longest Congress that had then been held took place in Birmingham. The Congress there of 1839 sat sixteen days. The Association of All Classes and the National Community Society were amalgamated and transmuted into something more wonderful still, “The Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists.”

The sixth Congress met in a music saloon, South Parade, Leeds, in May, 1840. The chief announcement made was that since the last Congress the estate of East Tytherly, in Hants, had been secured for the purposes of a community. This first Congress of the Community Society was occupied chiefly with the affairs of Tytherly.

The seventh Congress (second of the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists) met in Manchester in the great hall of the Social Institution, May, 1841. The affairs of Tytherly—the Queenwood Community, as it came to be called—was the main topic of debates, which lasted seventeen days. In the proceedings of this Congress the name of the present writer appears for the first time officially as appointed Social Missionary for Sheffield.

The eighth Congress opened May, 1842, in the new building, Harmony Hall, Queenwood. Standing orders were published this year. The later Congresses showed business progress and order of deliberation. More than the powers of a prime

<sup>1</sup> From “Montgomery’s Travels.”

minister were accorded to the president, that of choosing his administration and changing them at his discretion. This was the first Queenwood Congress. The docility which persecution had taught some tongues was shown by Mr. Fleming at this Congress, where he said by way of admonition to social missionaries that "fondness for theological controversy always argued an ill-regulated mind, to say the least of it; and he who fostered that spirit could be neither good nor happy."

The ninth Congress was a special one, called at the Institution, 23, John Street, Tottenham Court Road, July, 1842, to take the affairs of Harmony into consideration, as funds were wanted. The Congress sat on Sunday. The business occupied nine days.

The tenth Congress of May, 1843, again held at Harmony Hall, was styled the "Eighth Session of the Congress of the Rational Society" (the "special" Congress not being counted in official enumeration).

The eleventh Congress of the "Rational Society," as it was now called, took place again at Harmony Hall, May 10, 1844. Harmony Hall affairs occupied the main time of the delegates, who grew fewer as the business became more serious. Lack of funds and diminished members deterred or disqualified many societies from electing representatives.

The twelfth Congress met again at Harmony Hall, May 10, 1845. A series of elaborate business papers and financial and other statements were laid before the delegates. Mr. George Simpson was now the general secretary, quite the ablest man who had held the office in later years. Had Mr. Simpson been secretary from the beginning of the Queenwood community it would probably have had a different fate. A clear-minded, single-minded, and capable financial secretary is of priceless value in experimental undertakings.

A thirteenth "special" Congress was convened at the Literary and Scientific Institution, John Street, London, in July, 1845. The disposal of Harmony was the critical question debated. The proceedings were remarkable for a curious reactionary speech made by Mr. Lloyd Jones, who said "he had serious doubts now as to the good effects of their preaching for several years past, and it was with him a question whether they had bettered the state of those who by their preaching

they had loosed from the authority they were formerly under, and placed them under themselves." <sup>1</sup> Mr. Henry Hetherington stoutly said "it was always good to release individuals from the influence of bad men and false opinions, and was at a loss to conceive how people could be made better if it was not done." There are times when able men are discouraged at the small impression made on those with whom they are directly in contact. Truth often deflects from those it strikes, travels far and hits other men. Time alone shows the good done. It is worth while telling mankind when they are in known wrong. It gives men a motive to look in that direction. Besides, it is the duty of those who strive to be reformers to take care when they set men free from ignorant aims, that they place them under the dominion of intelligent and demonstrable ones, and provide for such repetitions of the teaching as shall keep the new conception strong and clear.

Socialism under Mr. Owen's inspiration and its own enthusiasm continued in its grand ways to the end. It issued proclamations, manifestoes, and addresses to her Majesty. If the Queen preserved them she must have left a fine collection.

The fourteenth and last of the Socialist Congresses was held at Queenwood Farm, June 30, 1846.<sup>2</sup> The *New Moral World* had ceased then, and these proceedings were reported in the *Reasoner*, which from 1846 vindicated and explained co-operative principle, and in every subsequent publication under the same editorship.

George Petrie, a Scotchman by birth, but who had the appearance of an Irish gentleman, served as a private in the army, and took part in the Peninsular wars. He was a man of courage, who ran generous and frightful risks for his comrades, from which only his wit extricated him. Settling in London among the co-operators he wrote a poem on "Equality," which was dedicated to Robert Dale Owen. He was an energetic man, and attracted many personal friends. He became an inmate of one of Mr. Baume's experimental cottages on the Frenchman's Island,<sup>3</sup> where he became insane in a month.

The Rev. C. B. Dunn, curate of Camberworth, is a name

<sup>1</sup> *New Moral World*, July 26, 1845.

<sup>2</sup> *Reasoner*, July 8, 1846.

<sup>3</sup> Pentonville Prison stands on the spot now.



which frequently occurs in the Congress and other co-operative reports as a successful speaker and advocate of Co-operation.

Among the writers of co-operative melodies was Mrs. Mary Leman Grimstone, a popular contributor to the *Monthly Repository*, edited by W. J. Fox, who some twenty-five years later became member of Parliament for Oldham, and who himself was one of the early and literary friends of Co-operation. Mrs. Grimstone wrote an acrostic on the founder of Co-operation :—

“ O mnipotent benevolence, this is thy holy reign :  
W oe, want, crime, vice, and ignorance shall fall before thy fame ;  
E re long, o'er all the gladd'n'd earth shall thy full blaze be glowing,  
N or leave a spot that shall not hear and bless the name of OWEN ! ”

All these glowing predictions should be deposited privately in some House of Prophecy, to be brought out when the day of fulfilment comes. The *Crisis* placed on the title-page of the first volume a portrait of Robert Owen enough to scare any one away from its pages. To compensate for this a vignette appeared, representing the Labour Exchange Institution at Gray's Inn Road. The design was a sort of Canaletto interior. The place never looked half so well as in this engraving. Very early in volume two this disappeared, and gave place to a large straggling parallelogram of a community. The *Crisis* was the first London weekly paper representing Co-operation, and excited great interest and hope.

The friends of the “great change” impending were far from intending that the public should pass through the “crisis” without knowing it. The Social Missionary and Tract Society of the time established three stations—at Primrose Hill, Copenhagen Fields, and White Conduit House—where they sold sixteen dozen of the *Crisis* in one day. All matters of interest to the party were made known in its columns. Mr. F. Bate would write a note to the editor “announcing that the Annual Report of the London Society would be received at Burton Rooms on Sunday morning, at ten o'clock.”

Though the co-operators were charged with latitudinarianism as respects responsibility, they appear to have had a very sharp conception of it in practice. Mr. Eamsonson was a shining light of that day. It was he who delayed the index of the

first volume of the *Crisis* for some time, in order to get a good likeness of Mr. Owen to put upon the title-page; and who finally produced that alarming one of which the reader has been told. This gentleman, having a debt which he was unable to get paid, actually inserted in the *Crisis* the following notice:—

“TO PERSONS IN DEBT.—Whereas, if Mr. Puckeridge, alias Mr. Mackellon, proprietor of the Royal Clarence Theatre, New Road, does not immediately settle the small account which is due to Eamonson, 15, Chichester Place, for papers, he will continue to give publicity to it by this and other means, as also some other persons who are in his debt, and whose conduct has been shuffling and unmanly.”

The sub-editor who suffered this notice to appear should have been wheeled away by the first costermonger who passed by the office with his barrow.

In the thirty-fifth number of the *Crisis* Mr. Owen associated with himself his son, Mr. Robert Dale Owen, as conductor of the paper. This occurred in November, 1832. Mr. Dale Owen and his father's joint names appeared for the last time in 1833. Volume two was much diminished in size. Articles still appeared in it with the welcome signature of “R. D. O.” Soon after, the journal stated that its co-editor, Robert Dale Owen, had set out for the United States; and the title-page bore the new title of National Co-operative Trades Union, and Equitable Exchange Gazette, the proceedings of Labour Exchanges and projected communities were the principal topics, and it gave the additional information that it was “Under the patronage of Robert Owen.” A third volume commenced in September, 1833. It now returned to its original size and name, and was again a spacious, well-printed paper.

From the prevalence of Mr. Owen's articles and expositions of his views in it, the probability is that he found the funds.<sup>1</sup> Its price was now three halfpence, having previously been one

<sup>1</sup> When the Labour Exchange was broken up at Gray's Inn Road by violence, 9,000 hours of labour notes were stolen—“abstracted” Mr. Owen said. These Mr. Owen undertook should be honoured if presented. About the time of the Queenwood Community of 1840, Mr. Owen appears to have come to the end of the money he had reserved for the furtherance of social principle, and appears afterwards limited to an income only sufficient for his personal comfort.

penny. It now bore two small engravings on either side of the title, one representing a small town where the buildings, on one hand, appear in very irregular groups, while opposite is a lunatic asylum. All the people to be seen in the streets before it are crippled, or blind, or ragged; while in the new town the buildings are in mathematical order; the walks well laid out, all the people there are well dressed, well-to-do, and perfectly upright. The artist, however, had no genius for sketching the new world; for the old, immoral arrangement of the houses, with their quaint appearance, presented a far better skyline than the monotonous regularity of the well-built pile. The lunatic asylum had a far more picturesque appearance, and must have been a pleasanter place to live in than the solid, prosaic structure with which it was contrasted.

A fourth and last volume of the *Crisis* appeared in 1834. By that time all the diagrams had disappeared. There was less and less of Mr. Owen in its pages, and more and more of the Rev. J. E. Smith, who was a continual lecturer at the Charlotte Street Institution, and his fertile and industrious lectures frequently filled the pages of the *Crisis*, which became more various in contents, and more readable; but Mr. Smith lectured upon Socialism with so much ingenuity that Mr. Owen did not know his own system, and at last he protested, announcing that he would issue an entirely new publication, to be called the *New Moral World*, stating, with his usual grandeur, that "the great crisis of human nature would be passed that week." At length the date was definite and the event near. Three years the crisis had been pulling itself together, but then, the world was shy. It had now determined to make the plunge. In the same number Mr. J. E. Smith protested, and announced that any persons left undispersed by the crisis he would gather into a fold of his own, and announced a new publication to be called the *Shepherd*. Amid a shower of fables and playful gibes at his illustrious colleagues and his disciples, Mr. Smith took his departure.

The Rev. J. E. Smith, better known subsequently as "Shepherd Smith," was one of those clever and curious spirits who alighted within the confines of Co-operation. He



was a born mystic, who explained everything by means of indefinite and untraceable analogies. He entertained his hearers, he baffled his questioners, he evaded his adversaries. He constantly said excellent things, but all that was admirable was mostly irrelevant. He became the wonder and delight of thousands who never hoped to understand him. Mr. Smith afterwards achieved a wide and prolonged repute as the fertile, diverting editor of the *Family Herald*. He made a fortune by his wit and inexhaustible variety, and, exemplary editor! he left it among his contributors, with a considerable portion to Mr. B. D. Cousins, his publisher, a pleasant and active promoter of Co-operation, whose name was honourably associated with those of Hetherington, Watson, and Cleave.

The *Crisis*, like all propagandist papers which preceded it, and many which followed it, appeared in several sizes, with fluctuations in quality, colour of paper, infirmity of type and orthography, price, and changed names. Like flags carried in battle, they were made out of such material as happened to be available in the exigencies of forced marches, and were often shot into tatters by the enemy. Taxes upon knowledge and upon news hampered them, and rendered them unable to include matter of daily interest. The *True Sun*, of 1834, stated that the *Crisis* was prevented assuming the character of a newspaper through the cost of the stamp, or it would probably have had a prosperous existence.

Two *New Moral Worlds* appeared—the first was issued August 30, 1834, and was larger and altogether better printed than the second, which was issued three months later, and formed the first of a series of annual volumes, which were continued until 1845. It showed vitality in a movement, attempting larger schemes when lesser ones had failed, that its weekly journal, the *New Moral World*, should have a career of twelve years before it. The August issue was described as the "Official Gazette of the National Association of Industry, Humanity, and Knowledge," a most compendious representation, it must be owned. The first article, addressed to the "Unions of Great Britain and Ireland," was signed W. R. Wood, the young and eloquent speaker, whose name appeared in the proceedings in relation to Labour Exchange.

The *New Moral World* may be regarded as the most

important, the longest continued periodical which the co-operators had established. Co-operation, however, was less formally noticed than in the *Crisis*. At this time co-operative societies were dying out all around. Mr. Owen and his disciples were more and more influenced by the belief that these small affairs could effect no permanent change in society, and that they must concentrate their endeavours on the establishment of the great social scheme, which should demonstrate once for all and for ever the possibility and advantages of organised industry and organised society. The failure of the Indiana and the Orbiston experiments certainly discouraged advocates, but Mr. Owen's persistent assertions that a larger combination of means only was wanted to attain a striking success, kept up the faith of many adherents. The missionary propaganda proposed in 1832, and put in operation in 1833, created a new generation of adherents. Numerous young men of considerable ability were inspired by the addresses made in various towns, and the facilities of discussion afforded in the various lecture-rooms gave them opportunities for public speaking. Popular excitement arising, and large audiences being attracted, active and provoking adversaries made their appearance, and all who could address an audience took the platform in defence of the new principles, acquired training as public debaters, and a stand was made on behalf of a great social change. How could any one within that enthusiastic circle doubt that Mr. Owen saw his way to the introduction of the new co-operative world, seeing that he had applied for the government of Coahuila and Texas, and that the Mexican Government had actually conceded to him the jurisdiction of the entire line of frontier stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, some 1,400 miles in length, and 150 miles in breadth, in which to establish his wonderful government of peace and plenty? <sup>1</sup> To plant the English millennium on 1,000 or 2,000 acres would, to use Mr. Disraeli's unpleasant and ignominious simile, be a mere "flea bite" of progress.

In 1834 a correspondent of Mr. Owen's, whose communication, signed "J. C.," appeared in the *New Moral World*, in November of that year, proposed a "Floating Co-operative

<sup>1</sup> *New Moral World*, September 26, 1835.

Community," which was to have its station on the Thames, where it was thought the inhabitants would be safe from the extortions of retail traders, lodging-house keepers, and gin-shops. Convenient shops were to be selected where the families of the floating society could go on shore for the instruction of the children in horticulture, agriculture, and botany. "Community" coffee-houses existed in London in 1834. Co-operators were never deterred by poverty of means. A halfpenny a week land fund had its enthusiastic members and friends, who expected to join Mr. Disraeli's territorial aristocracy by patient subscriptions of two shillings and twopence a year.<sup>1</sup>

At 14, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, was situated "The Institution" where Mr. Owen lectured every Sunday, and festivals and discussions were held on week-days. Socialism was always social. Its worst enemies could not deny this, and it first set the example of teaching working people to meet like ladies and gentlemen, on a pleasant equality, to abandon habits of isolation, sullenness, and conspiracy, and to chat, and sing, and dance, and think their way to schemes of competence. The *Poor Man's Guardian* of 1834, said, "We believe greater order or more genuine good feeling and politeness are not to be met with in any of the public assemblies in the metropolis or elsewhere." Considering that these assemblies were composed mainly of lodging-house keepers, newsvendors (who in those days were seldom long out of prison), grocers, tailors, costermongers, shoemakers, tallow-chandlers, and in some cases, as I know, sweeps, good people of conventional tastes were perplexed at this new species of association. It was not then understood that variety of industry was really the dress and decoration of the public service; and those who rendered none were merely nude and useless, and if they wilfully evaded work they were disreputable compared with those who lived by their honest labour. At length these assemblies commanded respect.

At the end of 1834 the first female co-operative association was formed. The object of the promotors was to form associative homes, and enable their members to acquire the art of living in contiguous dwellings. To raise funds these female

<sup>1</sup> *New Moral World*, No. 10, p. 64, December 20, 1834.



co-operators commenced selling tea and coffee, inviting the custom of the faithful to that end.

There were congratulations to the members of the Charlotte Street Institution on their having given spontaneous support to a grocery store, as it was in contemplation to open a meat-seller's store.

A French advocate of association, Mons. J. Gay, sent a letter by Dr. Bowring, in 1834, in which he described a plan of association which he had himself projected, and which was to consist of 12,000 souls. His dining-room was to be the size of the court of the Louvre, and capable of seating 12,000 guests—a very satisfactory dinner-party.

The "London weekly publication," as its advent was described, bore the title of the *New Moral World*. Its tone and terms were apostolic: otherwise its typographic style and appearance were inferior in quantity and quality of writing to the *Crisis*. It bore a proud, confident motto, which averred that "Silence will not retard its progress and opposition will give increased celerity to its movements." This was one of several famous sentences which Mr. Owen constructed. The great crisis of human nature, which was to take place in the fourth week in August, appears really to have come off, for the first serial number of the volume, appearing on Saturday, November 1, 1834,<sup>1</sup> declared in its opening sentence that "the Rubicon between the old world and the new moral worlds is finally passed."

These tidings were followed by twenty-one proofs of the principles and practices of the new state of things and were somewhat dull. The second number announced that "truth had at length gained the victory over error. Its reign upon earth had commenced, and would now prevail for evermore." The two volumes for 1835 and 1836 contained mainly papers by Mr. Owen.

Two pages of the *New Moral World* of 1835 contain the most intelligible and brief calculation of the material requirements in the way of agriculture, manufactures, and provisions for 500 persons of the working class which appears

<sup>1</sup> It was printed and published by Rowland Hunter, junr., at the office of the Association of All Classes of All Nations, 14, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square.

in the records of these schemes. The proportions of persons were 110 men, 110 women, and 280 children, who were to occupy 1,000 English acres, upon part of which a village was to be built for their habitations.

Early in the year, owing to the excessive cold which prevailed in 1835, Mr. Owen ceased to lecture in the Charlotte Street Institution, and delivered his addresses in his chapel in Burton Street, Burton Crescent.

Early in 1834 Mr. Owen had proposed that the "Friends of the human race" should form "An Association of all Classes, and of all Nations." An elaborate scheme was published of this comprehensive society, of which Mr. Owen was to be the "preliminary father." This paternal authority published the long proposals for a "change of system in the British empire" which were duly offered to the Duke of Wellington's administration.

Notices were published that at one o'clock on the 1st of May, 1835, a great meeting would be held in the Charlotte Street Institution, when the superseding of the old world by the new would be made, and the contrast between them would be made evident.

The A.A.C.A.N. (Association of All Classes of All Nations), the great cosmopolitan device of 1835, was formed at this meeting, "to effect an entire change in the character and condition of the human race." Mr. Braby opened the proceedings and Mr. Owen took the chair. His speech occupied, when published, nearly two entire numbers of the *New Moral World*, long enough to weary both worlds at once, and would have affected the temper of all the nations together, had they been present. Nor did the trouble end there. One Mr. Charles Toplis, of Leicester Square, had conceived an infernal engine, a sort of Satanic mitrailleuse, which was to eject a thousand balls in the time one man could fire one. This he called "the Pacificator." Mr. Toplis had the wit to send an account of the horrible thing to Mr. Owen, who thought it something like an act of Providence that it should reach him just as he had finished writing his address, as it seemed to confirm the announcement he had made of the probable termination of war all over the world. Mr. Toplis had, Mr. Owen thought, made war impossible by multiplying the

powers of destruction ; and he insisted upon the Toplis paper on "the Pacificator" being read, which being long must still have further wearied the Association of All Classes of All Nations. Indeed, the Toplis document was dull enough to have dispersed any army had it been read to them without any other application of "the Pacificator." The report says the meeting was numerous and respectable, but the only person of note who spoke at the end was Richard Carlile ; he, however, was a man of historic powers of endurance.

A congress was announced to be held fourteen days later, to set the A.A.C.A.N. going, when Mr. Owen stated that he should retire from public life. On that day he would be 65 years of age. He said that he had, while he was wealthy, taken the precaution of making his wife and children sufficiently independent of his public proceedings, which always involved pecuniary loss. Mr. Richard Carlile made an eloquent speech on Mr. Owen's retirement from public life. Henceforth the lectures in the Charlotte Street Institution were given in the name of the A.A.C.A.N. Of course, Mr. Owen never retired, and public letters appeared every week from his pen ; sometimes to Lord Brougham, at another time to Sir Robert Peel, and to Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer. Three months later Mr. Owen served upon a sub-committee with Thomas Attwood—a committee appointed of members of Parliament and others who had met at the Exchequer Coffee House, Palace Yard, to consider means of relieving the distress which then existed among the working class. Mr. Owen even wrote an address to the "Religious of all Denominations." Twelve months after his retirement, he was addressing letters to his Majesty William IV. from 4, Crescent Place, Burton Crescent.

In September, James Morrison, the editor of a trades-union journal called the *Pioneer*, died. He was the first platform and literary advocate of unionism, who obtained distinction for judicious counsel and a firmness made strong by moderation. He died prematurely through working beyond his strength. His widow was long known at the Social Institution, Salford, for activity and intelligence nearly equal to his own. She was one of the lecturers of the society.

This year some friends in Finsbury obtained possession of



Zebulon Chapel, in the Curtain Road, and converted it into an Eastern Associative Hall. It caused disquietude in certain quarters that "Zebulon" should become a social institution.

A Social Land Community Society was the quaint name of a scheme this year, which never got far beyond its name. We have known a good deal in London of co-operative tailors since "Alton Locke" appeared. In the "Social Land" year (1835); an association of the tailor craft conducted a business at 5, Brydges Street, Strand.

Mr. Owen's lectures on marriage, and that kind of perplexing thing, were first printed in volume one of the *New Moral World*, in 1835. Many thought them unfortunate in tone, terms, and illustrations; while those who thought ill of his objects found in them an armoury of weapons for assault which lasted them ten years. In the abstract pages of the *New Moral World*, the lectures were harmless and inaccessible, but some one had them reprinted in Leeds, and Mr. Joshua Hobson published them. It was then brought to light that the lectures were not verbatim, but made up of abrupt notes taken by a hearer. But Mr. Owen did not care to repudiate what he did not recognise. It did not need Mr. Owen to tell us that we cannot love whom we please; yet it continues true that we may all our lives remain pleased with those who allure us to like them. There are unsuitable marriages, when divorce is far more moral than association with hate. But in those days it was deemed sinful to think so.

The rubicon being passed so late as November 1, 1834, was followed on October 31, 1835, by the second volume of the *New Moral World*, which opened with the sub-title of the "Millennium." The full title read, "The New Moral World and Millennium." That hitherto evasive form of perfection had been secured. A junior member of the council of the A.A.C.A.N., unaware of it, delivered a lecture at the Charlotte Street Institution, on "Millennial Prospects."

A proposal was made for establishing co-operative Freemasonry, and a Lodge was determined upon, and the "punctual attendance of all the brothers was respectfully requested."

Trade unions and trade benefit societies took imposing titles. The printers, who acquire increase of sense by setting up the

sense of others, were first to have their Grand lodge, and schemes were published for establishing lodges in all nations of the world. An attendance of "all the Brothers" of the "Grand Lodge of Miscellaneous Operatives and Friends of Industry and Humanity" was called, in February, 1835. This catholic device certainly gave everybody a chance; for he must be very badly used by nature or circumstance who was not qualified to be classed among "miscellaneous" people.

Volume two of the *New Moral World* (1836) had a department called "Herald of Community," but the "Herald" was many years blowing his trumpet before forces appeared. Social reformers were always making "trumpet calls." In 1835 one W. Cameron, author of the first "Trumpet," announced a second, which he dedicated to Robert Owen, who certainly did not require it as his friends had a large stock.

About this time Mr. Owen became acquainted with a little book which afterwards made some noise, known as Etzler's "Paradise within the Reach of All Men." The great co-operator must have had some side of his nature open to wonder. The clever German undertook to put the whole world in ten years in a state of Paradise, which might be permanently maintained without human labour, or next to none, by the powers of nature and machinery. Etzler was a man who stood by the wayside of the world, and offered the philosopher's stone to any passer-by who would take it. "Look here," he cried in his preface, "ye philosophers, ye speculators, ye epicureans, behold a new, easy, straight, and short road to the summit of your wishes." By Mr. Etzler's invention the sea was to become a drawing-room, and the air a sort of upper chamber, for the accommodation of those who dwelt on the land. Mr. Owen regarded Etzler as a fellow-renovator of the universe, who had, in some wonderful way, got before him.

Now and then French Socialists contributed some astounding scheme of co-operative cooking, in a limited degree practicable, but was projected on a scale of magnitude which made it absurd. A proposal was made in Paris to supply the city with food by one immense *restaurateur*. One who had studied the project said, with something of the fervour of Mr. Etzler:

"Go and see it. There are Greek statues holding frying-pans, brilliant portraits of Lucullus, of Gargantua, Vatel, Carême, and all the great men who have honoured universal gastronomy. There you will see the great cook, M. de Botherall, skimming his gigantic pot, his forehead enveloped with a cotton nightcap and a viscount's coronet. To prove the profits arising from the scheme he offers to wrap his cutlets for twelve days in bills of 1,000 francs each. In a short time the restaurative omnibuses will circulate through Paris. A cook will be upon the front seat, and a scullion behind. These vehicles will contain broth and sauce for the whole city. There will be the soup omnibus, the omnibus with made dishes, and the omnibus with roast meat, running together, after which will come the tooth-pick omnibus, and lastly the omnibus with the bill." This must have been ridicule, but social editors quoted it as one of the possible schemes of the time.

Ebenezer Elliott had, like the Chartists who came after him, a political distrust of social amelioration. In 1836 Elliott made a speech in Sheffield in favour of news-rooms, in which he stood up stoutly on behalf of political knowledge, and said, "Be not deluded by the Owens, the Oastlers, the Bulls, and the Sadlers, these dupes of the enemy."

In 1836, Mr. Owen published the book of the "New Moral World," which, while it animated his disciples by many observations which it contained, gave persons of any vivacity of temperament rather a distaste for that kind of existence. The phrase, "taxes on knowledge," so often heard twenty years later, appeared in the *New Moral World* in February, 1836, imported from the *London Review*.

Notices of co-operative societies grew fewer and fewer in volume two of the *New Moral World*, but we have announcements that the "Religion of the Millennium" is now ready, and may be had of the publishers. In volume four of the *New Moral World*, November, 1836, occurs a notable passage which illustrates how poor an opinion Mr. Owen entertained of Co-operation, which had excited so many hopes, and had been the subject of so many endeavours. He related that on his journey to New Lanark he passed through Carlisle. Devoting Tuesday and Wednesday "to seeing the friends of



the system, and those whom I wish to make its friends: to my surprise I found there are six or seven co-operative societies, in different parts of the town, doing well, as they think, that is, making some profit by joint-stock retailing. It is, however, high time to put an end to the notion very prevalent in the public mind, that this is the social system which we contemplate, or that it will form any part of the arrangements in the *New Moral World*.

Later, in December, a prospectus appeared of an intended Hall of Science in Brighton, prefixed by the phrase, "Science belongs to no party." This might be true, but there were certainly many parties who never had it. These halls of science were devoted not to physical but to social science.

Mr. J. Ransom, of Brighton, was one of six who wrote a letter to the *New Moral World*, proposing means of increasing the sale of the publication, and showing that the early interest which Brighton took in Co-operation was still sustained.

A writer in the *Radical*, a weekly stamped newspaper, addressed several brief, well-written letters to the working class on the means of obtaining equality. The writer took the signature of "Common Sense," and published his letters in dateless pamphlets; but I believe the *Radical* appeared in 1836. The most striking thing that "Common Sense" had to say was that "the besetting sin of the working people is their admiration of the unproductive classes, and their contempt and neglect of their own." It must be owned that during this period of departure from Co-operation to Socialism, the new adherents got a little absurd. Their styling Mr. Owen the "Preliminary Father," and addressing him, as Mr. Fleming did in public letters, as "Our dear Social Father," showed the infirmity of tutelage. They pulled themselves together a little towards the end of 1836, when they silenced the Millennium gong, and called their journal the *New Moral World and Manual of Science*.

The ecstatic term "Millennium" ceased, and "Manual of Science" succeeded it; but when, instead of lectures, songs, and religion of the new time, the reader was introduced to papers on "The Functions of the Spinal Marrow," the transition was very great. The editor of a "Manual of Science"

had no means of furnishing it. Science then was not the definite, mighty thing it now is. The British Association for advancing it was not born till four years later. The *Penny Magazine* people and the Chambers Brothers both excluded discussions on politics and religion from their pages, and the journals of the co-operators were the only papers of a popular character which dealt with religion and politics, and recognised science as one of the features of general progress. The little they did, therefore, passed for much and meant much in those days. It was a merit, and no small merit, to recognise science when it was deemed a form of sin. The volume bearing the sub-title of "Manual of Science" did something to sustain the profession by giving a page or more in each number upon subjects of physical science. In several towns, notably in Manchester, the Socialist party erected Halls of Science. There was an instinct that science was the available providence of man, and would one day be in the ascendant. The volumes of the *Moral World* at this time were devoid of advertisements. The editor withheld necessary information from his readers of public and other meetings to take place on behalf of their own principles. "We refrain, he said, "from making formal announcements, which by some persons might be mistaken for advertisements; we never deal in this kind of merchandise," as though publicity was merely venal.

Mr. J. L. Gay, of Paris, addressed a letter to Mr. Owen, from which it appeared that the French world-makers did not think so much of the English contrivance to that end. Mr. Gay reports, that the most rational St. Simonians and Fourierites refuse either to hear or read any exposition of Socialism; but they very sensibly demanded a practical trial of it. They would look at that. The French Socialists of Mr. Owen's school were then about to establish a "Maison Harmoniène de Paris" (House of Harmony at Paris).<sup>1</sup>

The fourth volume of the *New Moral World* was printed by Abel Heywood, of Manchester,<sup>2</sup> always known to Radicals and Social Reformers as a man of honour, of energy, and the chief Liberal publisher of Manchester, when that

<sup>1</sup> *New Moral World*, December 24, 1836, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Volume three had been printed by John Gadsby, of the same city. The price of each number of the fourth volume of the *New Moral World* was three halfpence. A number contained eight pages.

trade required not only business ability, but the courage of meeting imprisonment. Volume four was more belligerent than the previous one. The politicians united against a system which disregarded immediate political right, under the belief that a state of universal community would render rights unnecessary, or secure them in full; but community was distant, and the need of political liberty was near. One number of the *New Moral World* stated that "Mr. Hetherington, with the Radicals at his back, decried their proceedings." The *New Moral World* published an article from the *Shepherd*, stating that Mr. Owen had been to Paris, and found that "the French were looking beyond politics, and lucky would it be for us also if, instead of palavering with such trifles as ballots, and canvas, and law amendments, we were to cast this small-ware overboard, and raise one loud and universal shout of social reorganisation. This patching and mending system is a miserable delusion." Yet the same article recorded that Mr. Owen had been prevented lecturing in Paris by the police, lest he should excite commotion through the numbers he attracted. The fact was a prompt rebuke of the contemptuousness expressed as to political freedom. The "small-ware" had great value in practice. The editor of the *New Moral World* had published offensive and foolish articles himself, disparaging Radical politics.

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In an article upon the name of the paper, the editor stated that he rejected the abandoned name of co-operator, the most sensible that had been adopted, and the members of the Grand Society of All Classes and All Nations wisely refused to be called Owenites, although they persisted in their affection for Mr. Owen, whom they designated at the same time their "social and right reverend father." At the Manchester Congress of All Classes of All Nations—at which only one class of one nation appeared, and a very small portion of that took part in the proceedings—they determined to call themselves Socialists. At this period, June, 1837, the *Moral World* was printed at Manchester, and then Mr. George Alexander Fleming became editor,<sup>1</sup> and also general secretary of the central board which had been formed. Henceforth the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fleming's editorship commenced June 10, 1837, and his resignation was dated from Avenue Cottage, Queenwood, November 8, 1845.



*Moral World* was edited with more controversial vigour, and with general energy and ability as a propagandist organ, but the last volume edited in London, the "Manual of Science" volume, was the most various and readable of the whole that had been published. It gave weekly a column taken from the "Daily Politician," composed of short passages of current political interest selected from the general newspaper press; notable sayings of philosophers, well-chosen anecdotes, extracts from books of mark and force, such as Mr. Mill's "History of British India," rendering that volume of the N. M. W. 1837  
readable to this day.

"Live for others," that afterwards became the motto of the Comtean religion of humanity, was the subject of an editorial article in the *New Moral World* for January 21, 1837.

Mr. W. D. Saull, of London, announced that he had received Exchequer bills to the amount of £1,000, of which the interest was to be devoted to the purposes of an educational friendly society—£500 more were announced when Mr. Baume appeared at Bradford as a deputy representative of the society. His proceedings being reported in the *Northern Star*, and quoted in the *New Moral World*, the editor added a caution against confounding that project with the National Community Society, and professed doubts as to the practicability of the plan.

The *Star in the East* commenced in 1837. Its price was fourpence-halfpenny. It was a newspaper and stamped, and the first which professedly advocated social views. Its editor and proprietor, Mr. James Hill, of Wisbech, was a member of the distinguished Rowland Hill family, to whom the public has been indebted for so many national improvements.

The east and north had both *Stars*, edited by Hills. Both *Stars* arose in the same year. The *Northern Star* had Feargus O'Connor for proprietor, and Mr. Hill, an energetic Yorkshire schoolmaster, for editor, but no relative of Mr. Hill, of Wisbech. The northern luminary was political, being the organ of the Chartists, but always friendly to social ideas—both proprietors being community makers in their way; Mr. James Hill having a peculiar social theory of his own to work out at Wisbech, chiefly educational, after the genius of his family; Mr. O'Connor having a land scheme which, with the usual

talent of reformers for administering to the merriment of adversaries, he located, among other places, at Snig's End.

The Rev. Joseph Marriott, who represented Rochdale at the Manchester Congress of 1837, published a drama entitled "Community," which appeared in the *N. M. W.* Some of the predictions of telegraphic facilities which it contained are now seen realised in every street, which then only the Socialist imagination would incur the risk of regarding as a possibility of the future. The fact of to-day was a "craze" then.

The Rev. Mr. Marriott was a gentleman of far more enthusiasm on the whole than discernment, for he described Mr. Thompson's essay on "The Distribution of Wealth" as a work "as superior to Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations' as one book can be to another." The subject was certainly an important supplement to the great topic stated by Adam Smith, but the difference in the capacity and range of thought of the two writers ought to have been perceptible even to enthusiasm. Adam Smith traced the laws which were found to operate in commercial affairs. Mr. Thompson planned the laws which he thought ought to operate under circumstances which had never existed. Yet if the public read Mr. Thompson's book they would be of opinion "that there was something in it."

In June, 1838, the seat of social government and the journal of the society were removed to Bennett's Hill, Birmingham. Mr. Guest became the publisher; known as the leading Liberal publisher of the town, as Mr. Heywood was of Manchester. The printer was Francis Basset Shenstone Flindell, of 38, New Street, Birmingham. The editor announced that various considerations had induced the Central Board to limit the number of impressions to 2,000. One consideration determined it, and that was that they had no more purchasers. There arose in Birmingham several advocates. It was the residence of Mr. Pare, the earliest and ablest organiser of the movement, and Mr. Hawkes Smith, its most influential advocate through the press; and the town furnished two lecturers, Mr. Frederick Hollick and the present writer. Birmingham was long distinguished for its influence in co-operative things. There was also actively connected with the Central Board an Irish gentleman, Mr. John Lowther Murphy,

the author of several minor works of original merit—the best known being “An Essay Towards a Science of Consciousness.” They were illustrated by diagrams, broadly designed, which had an air of ingenuity and newness. The argument was materialistic, put with boldness and with definiteness.

Occupying a professional position and having audacity in council and in action, Mr. Murphy was always a popular figure on the platform. Single, and a dentist in sufficient practice, no social persecution could reach him, since Christians with the toothache would waive any objection to his principles when he could afford them more skilful relief than any one else. In meetings of danger his courage was conspicuous and effective.

There is a conquest of conviction, and the leader herein was Mr. William Hawkes Smith, incomparably the wisest and most practical writer in defence of social views. He wisely maintained that the denunciation of religion was irrelevant to co-operative ends. His son, Mr. Toulmin Smith, became a man of eminence as a black-letter lawyer and author of remarkable works on municipal and parliamentary government.

A writer who really contributed accurate information on many subjects employed the instructive signature of a “Student of Realities,” whose name was Vieussieu, a gentleman in official employment at Somerset House, whose sons after him took a generous and expensive interest in social progress.

In those days a small book was published separately called “Outlines of the Rational System and Laws of Human Nature.” They were divided into five fundamental facts and Twenty Laws of Human Nature. Human nature in England was never so tried as it was during the first five years when these were discussed in every town in the kingdom. When a future generation has courage to look into this unprecedented code as one of the curiosities of propagandism, it will find many sensible and wholesome propositions, which nobody now disputes, and sentiments of toleration and practical objects of wise import.

The fifth volume of the *New Moral World* was enlarged to sixteen pages, and published at twopence. The phrase “Manual of Science” was now omitted. But it published



under the head of "Physical Science" Mr. Mackintosh's "Electrical Theory of the Universe." The volume showed a great increase in reports of propagandist lectures in numerous towns, and bore as its large-type title, the simple name of the *Moral World*, "New" being modestly subordinated.

"Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy" is the name of an energetic little book by Mr. J. F. Bray. It was a good deal read by co-operators of the time.

There was a *Social Pioneer* that made its appearance in 1839, printed by Mr. A. Heywood, of Manchester. It was rather late in March, 1839, to bring out a *Social Pioneer*, thirty years after those operators had been in business. In October of the same year a more ambitious journal appeared, entitled the *Working Bee*, "printed by John Green, at the Community Press, Manea Fen, Cambridgeshire, for the Trustees of the Hodgsonian Community Societies." It took the usual honest and determined motto "He who will not work neither shall he eat;" but it turned out that those who did work did not get the means of eating, there being no adequate provision made for this at Manea Fen.

Volume six of the Socialist journal started with the full pretentious title of *The New Moral World*, and the ponderous sub-title of "Gazette of the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists, enrolled under Acts of Parliament 10 George IV., c. 56, and 4 and 5 William IV., c. 40." This was the first time the movement put on a legal air. The sixth volume commenced in Leeds in July, 1838.

Volume seven also continued to represent the National Religionists of the Universal Community Society.

The eighth volume of the *Moral World* commenced a series of a larger size than had before appeared. It was as large as a moderate-sized newspaper, all in small type, and was the costliest weekly journal the co-operative party had yet commanded. The charge was threepence per number of sixteen pages, and was printed by Joshua Hobson, in Leeds, who was himself an author upon social and political questions, and was well known among the politicians of Chartist times as printer, and publisher also, of the *Northern Star*. The year 1840 was the culminating period of the Socialist advocacy. The expectation of a new community being near its establish-

ment brought an accession of writers to the *Moral World*; and the eighth volume was edited with spirit. The articles had a general and literary character.

In volume nine, which commenced January, 1841, the Rational Religionists still confronted the public on the title-page.

Volume ten was a serious issue, abounding in addresses and Congress reports, animated a little by reviews and accounts of provincial and metropolitan lectures. It commenced in July, 1841, and ended June, 1842. Never despairing, early in the volume, the editor again commenced to give directions how to obtain the millennium, although it had arrived and had had its own way some years previously. In October, 1841, the printing of the *Moral World* was brought back to London after wandering in the wilderness of Manchester, of Birmingham, and of Leeds five years.

The eleventh volume let slip one of its anchors. It began with the simpler sub-title "Gazette of the Rational Society." The Rational Religionists peremptorily disappeared. Whether they had sworn themselves into disrepute, they having taken to oath-taking, or found it onerous to maintain its clerical pretensions which raised the very questions of religious controversy which it was the duty of the society to avoid, was never explained.

The twelfth volume continued to mankind the comfort of knowing that there was in their midst one "Rational Society." Of course the meaning was that the society aimed at promoting rational conditions of life, and it was well that there should be some persons pledged to find out these conditions if possible. But unfortunately the name did not represent the aspiration, but seemed to express the fact; and "Rational Society" was not a fortunate term.

The thirteenth volume of the *New Moral World*, the largest and last of the official issue, commenced on June 29, 1844. The end, for a time, of all things communistic was then casting its ominous shadows before. In February, 1845, this journal was first printed at the Community Press, by John Melson, for the governor and company of Harmony Hall, Stockbridge, Hants. The last number printed there appeared on August 23, 1845. The type was sold, and bought by Mr.

James Hill, who bought also the second title "*Gazette of the Rational Society.*" Mr. Hill contended that he had bought the copyright of the paper. The title *New Moral World* Mr. Owen claimed as his copyright, and by arrangement with him, a further volume was commenced, under the title of the *Moral World*, the word "New" was omitted, and it appeared under the further editorship of Mr. Fleming. The result was that on August 30, 1845, two *Moral Worlds* again appeared, the old one being the new and the new one the old ; Mr. Fleming editing the *Moral World*, which Mr. Owen retained, and Mr. Hill editing the *New Moral World*, which he had bought. Mr. Hill's *New Moral World* continued to January, 1846, when he merged it into a new paper entitled the *Commonweal*. It ought to have borne the title of the Commonsqueal, for it shrieked. Under the words, "*Gazette of the Rational Society,*" which Mr. Hill retained, was printed Mr. Owen's motto: "Any general character, from the best to the worst, may be given to any community by the application of proper means, which are to a great extent under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of men." Underneath this Mr. James Hill placed his rival and refutatory motto: "It must certainly then be concluded that 'proper means' have not been applied, since such means to a great extent have been 'under the control' of Mr. Owen and those who have had influence in the affairs of the Rational Society." Mr. Hill himself had been an educational and social reformer of no mean note in his time. His *Star in the East* had been a journal of great interest and great instruction, but he had a faculty for vigorous and varied disputation, which grew by what it fed upon. He was a writer of ability and flexibility, who attacked with great celerity any one who dissented from him ; and if disputation could be entertaining of itself the new issue in his alien hands would have been the most alluring of the series.

The fourteenth volume of the *Moral World* suspended the profession of being the gazette of the Rational Society, which it appears was after all a saleable title, since Mr. Hill certainly bought and continued to use it, long after the society was practically extinct. Mr. Fleming described his new volume as the "advocate of the Rational System of Society, as founded



by Robert Owen." It was printed by McGowan and Company, the printers of the *Northern Star*, in London. Only eleven numbers of this volume were issued.

The close of 1845 and the early months of 1846 introduced to the social reader a new journal, bearing the ambitious and provoking title of the *Herald of Progress*. Mr. John Cramp was the projector and editor of it. The present writer was one among the contributors after it commenced.

During these later years there was collateral activity in social literature in several quarters, but Co-operation seldom attracted attention. Mr. Frederick Bate published in 1841 a play, in five acts, entitled "The Student." Mr. Goodwyn Barmby, a poet who possessed real lyrical power, an advocate of original tastes, hung up his hat in the social hall, where no hat save his could hang. He married "Kate," the clever correspondent of the *New Moral World*. Mr. Barmby founded a Communist church, and gave many proofs of boldness and courage. He and Dr. George Bird, who afterwards obtained professional eminence in medicine, issued a prospectus of the London Communist Propagandist Society. Dr. Bird contributed the best literary reviews which appeared in social publications of the day. Mr. Lewis Masquerier, of New York, was a frequent correspondent, known from 1836 as a fertile and original author of social works, and was distinguished as a leader of the land reformers of America, who took for their motto certain famous words from Jefferson, namely, "The mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their back, for a favoured few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God."

In 1840 the Fourierites established in London a paper called the *Morning Star*, edited by Mr. Hugh Doherty, a writer who had puzzled the readers of the *Moral World* through many a wearying column. He entitled his journal *A Phalansterian Gazette of Universal Principles and Progressive Association*. Its sources of authority were the book of Scripture and the book of Nature. Dr. Doherty published works of value afterwards to those who accept Fourierist principles.

In 1842 a magazine, entitled *The Union, and Monthly Record of Moral, Social, and Educational Progress*, was edited by Mr. G. A. Fleming. It contained papers from the fertile and

ingenious pen of "Pencil'em," by January Searle, Charles Lane, Charles Bray, and a writer who used the name of Arthur Walbridge, who wrote a story of "Torrington Hall," and a very suggestive book on "Social Definitions"; and anonymous papers by eminent and popular writers, whose names the editor suppressed on the uninteresting principle that truth should stand unsupported by names which might induce people to look at it. Reformers in those days took pride in adopting all the means they could to prevent the truth they had in hand becoming popular, and then complained that it had few friends.

In 1843 there appeared a publication entitled the *New Age*, a less pretentious title than the *New Moral World*. The *New Age* was also called the *Concordian Gazette*. It represented a small band of mystics, who were inspired by James Pierrepont Greaves, one of whose doctrines was, "as man cannot do right when he himself is wrong, a right nature must be superadded to him in order to establish right institutions in society." One of the conditions, as Mr. Greaves would say, were pure air, simple food, exercise, and cold water, which he contended were much more beneficial to man than any doctrinal creeds, or churches, chapels, or cathedrals. Mr. Greaves was seldom so clear and intelligible as this. He was himself the most accomplished, pleasant, and inscrutable mystic which this country has produced. He possessed competence, which enables a man to be unintelligible and yet respected. An American gentleman, Mr. H. G. Wright, who was a natural Greaves, described him as possessed of "a lofty forehead, a well-defined contour, a nose inclined to the aquiline, a deep, sonorous, slightly nasal voice, a stature rather above the middle height, and a marvellous eye. Mystery, God, Fathomlessness, all were written upon him." A man of mark, after his kind, it must be owned.

The disciples of Mr. Greaves took premises at Ham Common, in Surrey, which they called Alcott House. The society was called the First Concordian. It was also the last. Their two best writers were Charles Lane, who dated from Concord, Massachusetts, and Goodwyn Barmby. The *New Age*, its organ, was very intelligently edited, but was discontinued when it had existed little more than a year and a half, on the

ground that "no book could represent what was passing in that establishment. Even the proceedings of a single day were found to be of far greater moment than could be transcribed or recorded in any work whatever." Those who visited the Concordian were certainly not of this opinion. The inmates were scrupulously clean, temperate, transcendental, offensive to any one who ate meat, attached to Quakers, especially white ones, repudiated even salt and tea, as stimulants, and thought most of those guests who ate their cabbage uncooked. They preached abstinence from marriage, and most things else. Their cardinal doctrine was that happiness was wrong. The managing director, Mr. William Oldham, was called Pater, and, like Howard, preferred damp sheets to dry ones. Mr. Lane invited the Pater to join the Shakers at Harvard, Massachusetts, where he would find no want of liberty to carry out his self-denying plans to the utmost. A very little liberty is sufficient to do nothing in, and a very small space would have enabled the society to carry out its only experiment, which consisted in standing still in a state of submission to the Spirit until it directed them what to do. Mr. Greaves' disciples, however, had the great merit of pausing before they did anything until they had found out why they should do it, a doctrine which would put a stop to the mischievous activity of a great many people, if thoughtfully followed.

So late as 1843 Mr. G. A. Fleming and Mr. Lloyd Jones opposed the Anti-Corn Law League. An active representative of the school, Mr. Ironside, a well-known partisan of Socialism in Sheffield, reported on one occasion that he had been to hear Dr. Smiles, editor of the *Leeds Times*, lecture on Complete Suffrage, and "was at a loss to imagine how Socialists could waste their time in listening to expositions of such petty measures as these."

The Central Board issued charters authorising the foundation of branches in the different towns, when satisfied as to the zeal and respectability of the parties making application for them; which long hung up in places of honour in some of the old halls. Occasionally a grand notification was made to the branches of the Association of All Classes of All Nations, and to all others whom it might concern, running thus: "Whereas, the Congress of the Association [with the far-reaching name]



did, for the more extensive and systematic diffusion of the social principles, divide Great Britain and Ireland into certain districts with missionary stations ; and whereas a memorial has been presented to the Central Board from the branch of the Association, situate at Sheffield, requesting that that town may be made a missionary station, and that a district may be assigned for the labours of the missionary. Now, therefore, we, the Central Board, in pursuance and by virtue of the power and authority vested in us by the Congress, and in consideration of the memorial hereinbefore mentioned, do hereby make the following revision of the districts : that is to say, the town of Sheffield, and generally that part of the county of York not included in the Leeds district, to be taken from the Manchester district ; the towns of Derby and Nottingham, and generally the county of Nottingham, and that part of the county of Derby north of a line drawn immediately south of the town of Derby, to be taken from the Birmingham district ; and the county of Lincoln to be taken from the London district ; and, further, we do hereby order and determine that the counties and parts of counties and towns so taken from the said districts shall constitute a new district, to be called the Sheffield district, which shall comprise :—

Sheffield	Spalding	Ashbourn
Rotherham	Market Deeping	Belper
Doncaster	Bourn	Wirksworth
Barnsley	Folkingham	Cromford
Thorn	Grantham	Alfreton
Barton-upon-Humber	Lincoln	Mansfield
Great Grimsby	Gainsborough	Bakewell
Louth	East Retford	Buxton
Market Rasen	Newark	Dionfield
Boston	Nottingham	Chesterfield
Holbeach	Derby	Worksop"

This was the extent of my diocese when I was appointed Social Missionary for Sheffield.

Then they did "furthermore order and determine" certain other things, not necessary here to recite. All this legal pomposity could never have been of Birmingham growth. The board there had acquired a Mr. Bewley, as a secretary, a gentleman of capacious ways, who might have inspired those extraordinary terms. The enumeration of places which comprised the district of Sheffield was, however, real. There was

work doing and to be done there. It was no uncommon thing to meet in social literature a protestation that "we must not be understood as advocating any *sudden* changes."<sup>1</sup> Seeing how limited was its means there was no possible danger in their peremptory efforts.

A disastrous peculiarity in advocacy, by which the pages of co-operative journals were disfigured, was that of quoting the most offensive things said against the doctrines and advocates of its own party. The enemy never did that by them; but this fact never instructed them. The information the Socialist editors were able to give their readers was not much. They could seldom afford to pay the printer for what they did give; and yet they went to the expense of reprinting and circulating among their own adherents the most unpleasant imputations which embittered wit could make against them. All timid adherents were alarmed when they saw these things. Half-informed adherents could not possibly tell what answer could be made; and prudent readers withdrew at once from a cause against which such imputations were being made, and which they were called upon to circulate among their own family and friends. Sharp-witted adversaries had every encouragement to go on, multiplying their accusations, the publications, and exhaust all the means of the society in publishing effective disparagements of itself. The outside public possessed writers more numerous and skilful than these semi-penniless reformers could command. Such, however, was their infatuation that they not only suffered the sharpshooters of the enemy to take aim at their own readers from their own pages, but allowed the rabble of evangelical pamphleteers and tract writers to possess their gates, and to pelt them with mud and stones.

On one occasion the editor, Mr. Fleming, having made a vehement comment upon the Manca Fen scheme, afterwards expressed his regret in a very manly way that he had violated the pacific principles imposed by Socialism upon its representatives. Imputative terms were often applied to opponents. From some, it was said, "the truth was not to be expected." Charges of "dishonesty," of "wilful misrepresentation" were made, which obliges all the friends a man of honour has to come forward in his personal defence; and enables all the

<sup>1</sup> "Outlines of Various Social Systems," 1844.

friends a scoundrel has to intrude themselves in the controversy. Nevertheless, it ought to be said, as it honestly may, to the credit of the social party, that though its leaders lacked a clear grasp of principles of neutrality in invective, it was only on great provocation that they spoke ill of others. Compared with the vituperation and personalities of every other party, political and religious, of their day, they were examples of forbearance to adversaries, who showed them no quarter. A page of laughter is a better defence against a worthless adversary than a volume of anger. Terms which impute want of honour to others, or accuse them of conscious untruth, dishonesty, or bad motives, are charges with which the judge and not the journalist may deal.

When one person makes imputations of dishonesty upon another, the only legitimate notice is to kick him, and nobody ought to make these imputations unless he is prepared for that operation being performed upon him; and no editor ought to permit such imputations unless he is prepared to recognise that form of reply.

Many things, social, polemical, and progressive, with which society now concerns itself, appears to have begun in one or other co-operative publications; or if not originated were espoused, and publicity accorded, when they were denied any hearing elsewhere.

Abram Combe called his organ of Orbiston the Register of the Adherents of Divine Revelation. The editor said that "Abram Combe was perfectly right in adopting whatever name he thought proper, as a free and unbiassed expression of his conscientious opinions." [If Mr. Combe's object was not to establish a public community for public advantage, but simply a group of persons for the profession of Combism—he was right, but the universality of communism was gone.] The editor added, "We are great lovers of candour and moral courage." Yet the editor, Mr. Fleming, abandoned (when imprisonment overtook them) two social missionaries, the present writer being one, Mr. Charles Southwell, of spirited memory, was the other. I was put upon my trial for delivering a lecture in Cheltenham upon "Home Colonies." It was never pretended by the witnesses that the lecture was otherwise than neutral, and it was admitted by the judge, Mr. Justice



Erskine, that no remark whatever was made in it which transgressed the proper limits of the subject. In the town of Cheltenham, in which it occurred, a small Socialist poet, one Mr. Sperry, suspected of heresy, had been induced to recant, and had then been naturally abandoned and despised by those who had promised him advantage if he did so. This affair had produced an impression in the town that Socialist speakers were wanting either in courage or honesty, and the same feeling existed in other towns. The Bishop of Exeter had really frightened many. When Mr. Pare was forced to resign the registrarship of Birmingham, it became a question with other gentlemen, who held official situations, how far they were prudent in standing connected with this party. The Central Board began, under alarm, to urge the policy of theological neutrality, which they ought to have adopted earlier on principle. Some of the missionaries took a running leap into the clerical ranks, upon which they had so long made war. They obtained licenses as preachers, and advertisements were issued, setting forth that lectures would be delivered to the Societies of the Rational Religionists, by the "Rev. B. Swearatlast" and the "Rev. J. Swearatonce." As the gifts of these gentlemen were not understood to lie in this direction, this step caused scandal. When, at the Cheltenham lecture referred to, a question was put by one of the audience, having a theological object, I gave a definite and defiant answer, which, at least in that place, restored the reputation of Socialist speakers for uncalculating explicitness. Neither the trial and imprisonment which followed, nor the parliamentary proceedings in reference to it, were ever mentioned in the *New Moral World*. Room was found for articles on "Chinese Manure" and the "Sense of Beauty," but in its Samaritan pages no reference was made to the missionary, who had literally "fallen among thieves" in the discharge of his official duty. Mr. Owen, the president, had said to the Congress, only a month before, "When we are questioned on any subject, we should declare what convictions we are obliged to have. Such is the ground I mean to take. What I have told you is my determination, and, though not a single individual go with me, I shall pursue the same course."<sup>1</sup> A special Congress was held during the imprisonment of the

<sup>1</sup> *New Moral World*, May 28, 1841.

missionary lecturer in Gloucester Gaol, and no allusion was made, no resolution proposed respecting him. The Central Board addressed weekly its "Friends, Brothers, and Sisters" upon many subjects, but they never suggested that some help might be needed in a certain household, though the subscription of a penny a day, by the members of the board, would have saved one young life in it.

What was wanted was neither defiance nor compliance, unless there was a change of conviction. Then a manly and explicit retraction of what errors the convert supposed himself to have held was due as an act of honour; so that the abandoned opinions might no longer possess the influence, whatever it might be, that his authority and example could be considered to lend to them.

The Hall of Science, in Manchester, was registered in the Bishop's Court as a place of worship belonging to a body of Protestant Dissenters called "Rational Religionists," and by that means it was brought under the Act of Parliament which licensed it to be open for divine worship. This Act rendered all who officiated in the building liable to be called upon to take the following oath:—

I solemnly declare, in the presence of Almighty God, that  
*I am*

First. A Christian, and

Second. A Protestant; that as such, *I believe*

Third. The scriptures of the New and Old Testament, commonly received among the Protestant churches, do *contain* the revealed Word of God; and that I do receive

Fourth. The same as the *rule of my doctrine and practice.*

Mr. Swearatlast (Robert Buchanan) took this oath in Manchester. Mr. Maude, the magistrate, who administered it, first demanded to know whether this was an oath binding on his conscience, and whether he really believed in a future state after death of rewards and punishments? This missionary, who had been several years lecturing against every one of these points, as one of the expounders of "truth without mystery, mixture of error, or the fear of man," replied that he did believe in all these things, and that the oath was binding upon his conscience. The Central Board never repudiated the missionaries who thus lied in open court before the whole

city. Indeed, the editor of the *New Moral World* justified it, and stated that he would take it. Mr. Buchanan had sufficient self-respect to make scruples about it. He was anxious to prove to the court that he had a conscience, and to stand well before the public; and the court was adjourned to give him time to make up his mind. On Tuesday, August 11, 1840, he appeared, took the oath, and made the declaration under 19th George II., c. 44, and received his certificate of having done so.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fleming so far respected the moral sense of his readers of the *Moral World* as never to publish this discreditable scene. Mr. Swearatonce (Mr. Lloyd Jones) gave his own account of how he went through the part on February 13, 1841, in Bristol. "On Tuesday I attended at one o'clock for the purpose of taking the oath. The office was crowded by gentlemen who seemed anxious to see the performance. It passed off very comfortably. I took it without any words. I am now, therefore, the REV. LLOYD JONES." The small capitals are the "REV." gentleman's and the word "performance" too.<sup>2</sup>

Other gentlemen than those who were present long remembered these scenes reported in the press. Many years after, when the present writer was concerned in getting the Secular Affirmation Bill passed through Parliament, Sir George Cornewall Lewis demanded, reproachfully (looking at me as I sat in the gallery of the House of Commons as he spoke), "Where are your cases? Where are the men of honour who refuse the oath? It is your free-thinker who takes it 'without any words.'"

Those of us who had consented to act as missionaries were in some sort, in our secular way, apostles of a new state of society, which, we weekly assured the public by the title of our accredited journal, was to be at least "moral," if not otherwise notable. Then it did not become any of us—so it seemed to me and my colleagues of the protesting school—to

<sup>1</sup> *Sun*, August 14, 1840.

<sup>2</sup> These proceedings made Mr. Southwell indignant, and being a man of fiery courage, he wrote an article in the *Oracle of Reason* (started as a protest against the *New Moral World* policy of the day), which caused his imprisonment for twelve months. He intended to defy prosecution; and Sir Charles Wetherall, who was his judge, was a man quite ready to meet him half-way in supplying it. Mr. Southwell was imprisoned in Bristol and 1 in Gloucester Gaol.



fall, in self-respecting honour, below those other apostles with whose teaching we were in many respects "non-content." Though sincerity does not imply errorlessness, it gives dignity to those who profess error honestly. The Christian apostles had this personal dignity. It seemed to me, for one, that we had no moral right to dissent from them publicly, were we content to advance our cause by meaner means than theirs. We could not be their equals in advantage. Our inspiration was not owing to contact with a celestial teacher : but it was in our power to be their equals in honesty, and refuse to profess the opinions we did not hold, whatever peril, or personal loss, or social discomfort followed. We were to teach "truth without mixture of error." Even when we follow mathematical truth—dealing with definite and palpable magnitude—we travel but a short way, into the realms of certainty ; while in moral and social things—where "sense is narrow and reason frail"—who can fathom truth without error ; or escape the need of hourly precaution, qualification, and moderation ? We were to teach "without fear of man." That was the one thing possible in the humblest advocates. Fearlessness of man—in the discharge of the duty of speaking in the spirit of relevance, conceding the same freedom to others—that was within our power. To fail herein before the world, in the publicity of a court of law, where persecution gave us the priceless opportunity of winning respect, seemed alike a failure of policy and honour.

He has no claim to free speech unless his object is to utter true speech and to maintain veracity among the people by example. Though I never took an oath of any kind in my life, since I could not take it in the sense in which the court administered it, yet I am no fanatic against oaths, and respect those who take them sincerely. The common instinct of society respects the memory of those poor and humble religionists of despised sects, who, having hardly any grace but that of sincerity, have suffered torture and death rather than say the thing which was not. Socialists who professed to introduce a higher morality were bound to set an equal example. Addison usefully tells us of Euripides that : "The great tragic poet, though famous for the morality of his plays, had introduced a person who, being reminded of an oath he had taken,

replied, '*I swore with my mouth, but not with my heart.*' The impiety of this sentiment set the audience in an uproar; made Socrates (though an intimate friend of the poet) go out of the theatre with indignation, and gave so great offence that he was publicly accused and brought upon his trial, as one who had suggested an evasion of what they thought the most holy and indissoluble bond of human society, so jealous were these virtuous heathens of any the smallest hint that might open a way to perjury."

It was to the credit of Socialism that the oath-taking related led to a schism in the party. Undoubtedly we did harm of one kind—at the time. In setting up a new camp we weakened the force which held the recognised co-operative fort; and those who may be influenced by our example should weigh well the responsibility we incurred, and be satisfied whether we were justified in our course before they imitate us.

Others, as stout Mr. Finlay, of Edinburgh, and Mr. Pater-son, then of the same city, Mr. Adams and Mrs. Adams, of Cheltenham, not missionaries but of the party, underwent imprisonment on the same account. Dr. Watts, Mr. Jeffery, and Mr. Farn, who were all missionaries, rendered every help in their power to sustain the protesters. Mrs. Emma Martin fearlessly aided. Nor will I omit to mention, with what honour I can, my untiring friends in the Gloucester affair—Maltus Questell Ryall, a man remarkable alike for ability and courage, and William Chilton also. Both cared for Socialist honour; no personal peril intimidated them from vindicating it.

It was the intention of the opponents of the propagation of social views to close the halls by forcing the oath described upon the lecturers. The Rev. Mr. Kidd, and some other divines, took the step of indicting the owners of the halls for receiving money for admission at the doors. As the partisans of Co-operation were not wealthy, and incurred expense beyond their means in disseminating their views, it was only by taking admission money at the doors, that they could maintain their advocacy. The clergy knew this, and calculated that if they could prevent admission money being taken, they would succeed in closing the hall. It was a shabby, but a well-calculated proceeding. Accordingly, they did lodge an

indictment against the hall owners in Manchester, for receiving money at the doors. They found an Act of Parliament of the reign of George III. (fruitful in infamous Acts), which levied serious fines upon the conductors of halls if money was taken at the door on the Sunday, unless such hall was licensed as a place of worship. The Rev. Mr. Kidd's prosecution failed, the directors producing a license which described it as the authorised place of worship of the Rational Religionists. But, as the speakers in a licensed hall must be licensed preachers, Mr. Kidd next prosecuted the lecturer at the hall, who, we have seen, eventually took the oath. Mr. Kidd thus triumphed.

In various halls in the country to this day money is taken without their being licensed, and addresses are delivered by lecturers who never took any oath as preachers ; but, owing to the ignorance or generosity of the clergy, no legal steps are taken against them, which, if taken, must have the effect of degrading the speaker or closing their proceedings. These Georgian Acts are still in existence, and persons of pernicious intent still put them in force. A few years since eminent scientific teachers in London, Huxley among them, were prevented by them from instructing the people on the Sunday. The Aquarium at Brighton was closed by them on the same day ; and in no Co-operative Hall is it legal to take money for lectures or even a tea-party on the Sunday, and the most valued forms of co-operative life are arrested by those clerical laws. Thus Co-operation has not only to be judged by what it has done, but what it has been prevented doing.

Amid the crowds of incidents and of persons, in connection with this movement, many remain unnamed lest the weight of detail oppress the reader. Where two events or two persons equally serve to explain the story, like the two women grinding at the same mill, one is taken, and the other left.



## CHAPTER X

## THE LOST COMMUNITIES

"Seeing that human society labours under a chronic want of disinterestedness and mutual consideration on the part of its members, there is a demand for select or heightened pictures of love, devotedness, and sympathy, as an ideal compensation."—PROFESSOR BAIN.

It is a long time since Joseph de Maistre declared that "the human race was created for a few, that it is the business of the clergy and the nobility to teach the people that which is evil and good in the moral world, and that which is true and false in the intellectual world. Other men have no right to reason upon such things: the people must suffer without murmuring." In these days the people decline to suffer. They resent the infliction of suffering upon them. They see that the inequalities of nature are made greater by the wilful contrivances of men. The people protest against inferiority being imposed upon them. They see that some men by opportunity, energy, and enterprise are able to fend themselves against suffering. The people endeavour to equalise opportunities for themselves by the establishment of communities. Though they have not much to show for their efforts, they set a self-helping example. Their failures are not to be mourned over, but imitated. France, which for years held political supremacy in Europe, lost it by the conspiracy of an imperial adventurer, who happened to possess a talent for assassination.

Though France, in its own brilliant and insurgent way, has borne the palm of distinction for the propagandism of social reform, England in a quieter way has shown the capacity for comprehending equality. A distinguished lawyer, who had

great knowledge of the municipal history of his country, the late Toulmin Smith, of Birmingham, in his great book on the "History of Early English Guilds," traced the social features of English life with a research in which he had no compeer. His daughter, Lucy Toulmin Smith, in the befitting preface which she supplies to her father's work, states that the early "English guild was an institution of local self-help which, before Poor Laws were invented, took the place, in old times, of the modern friendly or benefit society, but with a higher aim. It joined all classes together in a care for the needy and for objects of common welfare."

"Guilds," says this authoress, "were associations of those living in the same neighbourhood, and remembering that they have, as neighbours, common obligations, regarding love to one's neighbour, not as a hollow dogma of morality, but known and felt as a habit of life."

It is also worthy of notice in these days, in which we flatter ourselves that social reform is being born—that there were "scarcely five out of the five hundred gilds known to history which were not formed equally of men and of women." The British Association for the Advancement of Science has admitted ladies to read papers at its meetings. This has been counted an astonishing step. It is creditable, but not astonishing, seeing that in the old social days English women were counted upon to take part in the civil progress of the city. Many women who take part in these movements think it a new thing; and many more, who stand aloof, think it unwomanly, not knowing that they are merely the degenerate daughters of noble mothers who thought it their duty to take a public part in the duties of society.

In 1870 the Deputy Johann Jacoby, addressing his constituents in the Second Arrondissement of Berlin, said: "The great end before the people is the abolition of the wage system, and the substitution in its place of co-operative labour." The late Mr. Frederick Cowell Stepney, a great friend of British and foreign workmen, said, in their behalf, that "The emancipation of the working classes must come from the working classes themselves. The struggle for the emancipation of the workman is not a struggle for class privileges, but for the obliteration of all class dominion. It is, therefore, worth while

looking a little at some Lost Communities, whose romantic story has instruction and encouragement in it.

When the tireless Welsh reformer, of whom we have spoken, was one day dining at the house of a Frankfort banker, he met a renowned German statesman, Frederick Von Gentz. "I am in favour of seeing a social progress commence," said Mr. Owen, "for if union could replace disunion, all men would have a sufficiency." "That is very possible," replied Von Gentz; "but we by no means wish that the masses should become at ease and independent of us. All government would then be impossible." This was the old idea of the higher classes. Every one sees now that government will never be secure until competence and independence are enjoyed by the people.

When the term "Social Science" was first employed in England it sounded as the most visionary word dreaming philosophy had suffered to escape in its sleep. Statesmen had none of that quality which scientific men call prevision—a compassing foresight, seeing what ought to happen, and taking care that it should happen. Society was a sort of legally arranged blunder, the costly device of public incompetence. We are still in that state that Fourier used to call our "incoherent civilisation." It is from this that community contrivers strive to deliver us.

A Pantisocracy was the idea of cultivated men, a name derived from Greek words, implying a state in which all govern and all serve. This is one of the prettiest definitions of association extant. Communities on a superstitious basis have hitherto been the most successful. It is easier to trust in what you are told than to find out what you ought to trust in. Science is the latest born power of the understanding. The knowledge of it, belief in it, the use of it, and the trust in it, are of slow growth. Reality seems to be the last thing men learn. When they do come to comprehend its nearness, its importance, its influence over their destiny, men will avail themselves of its teachings. There will be heard then from platform and pulpit words of passion, of power, of fiery counsel, such as fitful, fluctuating belief in unseen influences have never yet called forth.

It is quite true, as Italians say, "he who has a partner has a



master"; and this is true of marital partnership, yet men and women enter gladly into it. All association is sacrifice of minor things for the attainment of greater. In religious societies sacrifice is made by authority, in secular association the authority is common sense, and that is not common. The reason of every great step has to be made plain to the general understanding. As intelligence increases association becomes more possible. Co-operation to the extent it now prevails was impossible, until later years. Association is still an almost unknown art. Religious communists have sought peace and plainness, security and competence. Secular communists seek peace and art, intelligence and prosperity. Intelligent individuality will exceed anything hitherto realised by communities of mere industry and faith.

One who gave the English people the earliest and the first unprejudiced account of American communities, Harriet Martineau, says: "If such external provision, with a great amount of accumulated wealth besides, is the result of Co-operation and community of property among persons so ill prepared for its production as these, what might not the same principles of association achieve, among a more intelligent set of people, stimulated by education, and exhilarated by the enjoyment of all the blessings which Providence has placed within the reach of man? If there had been no celibacy amongst them they would probably have been much more wealthy. The truth of these positions cannot be doubted by any who have witnessed the working of the co-operative system. *It can never now rest till it is made matter of experiment.*"<sup>1</sup>

Communities are, as yet, in their infancy. There are two causes which account for the failure of many of them.

First. The want of sufficient capital to maintain the place for a few years on a frugal scale, until the members could be trained in self-supporting efficiency.

Second. Members were not picked men, nor pledged to obey the authority established among them, and readily removable if unsuitable.

Schemes of social life require the combination of means and intelligence, and have to be attempted many times before they

<sup>1</sup> Society in America.

succeed. Could the present railway system have been perfected in the minds of inventors at the beginning of the century, it could not have been got into work, for no workmen were to be had of sufficient skill to make the engines or conduct the traffic.

The most sensible account given of the English system by a foreigner is that which Buonarroti made at the end of his long life in a letter to Mr. Bronterre O'Brien.

"Babeuf," he said, "attempted to combine a numerous people into one single grand community; Owen would multiply in a country small communities, which, afterwards united by a general bond, might become, as it were, so many individuals of one great family. Babeuf wished his friends to seize on the supreme authority, as by its influence he hoped to effectuate the reforms they had projected; Owen calculated on success by preaching and by example."

Mr. David Urquhart, a writer who never fails to interest the reader, and to whom the public are indebted for much out-of-the-way knowledge, gave in his work on "Turkey and its Resources," in 1833, a remarkable account of the great Co-operative Society of Ambelakia, whose varied activity was a miracle of co-operative sagacity. It would have continued had there been a court of law in which questions in dispute could be speedily and cheaply settled. It has been the fate of Co-operation often to be, not only before its time, but before the law.

"Ambelakia," says Mr. Urquhart, "is the name of a spot overlooking the Vale of Tempe, where an extraordinary association had a brilliant existence of twenty years. . . . I extract," says Mr. Urquhart, "from Beaujour's '*Tableau du Commerce de la Grece*' the details he has preserved respecting it, in as far as they were confirmed to me by the information I obtained on the spot.

"Ambelakia, by its activity, appears rather a borough of Holland than a village of Turkey. This village spreads, by its industry, over the surrounding country, and gives birth to an immense commerce which unites Germany to Greece. Its population has trebled in fifteen years, and amounts at present (1798) to 4,000, who live in their manufactories like swarms of bees in their hives. The Ambelakiot faces are serene; the

slavery which blasts the plains watered by the Penens, and stretching at their feet, has never ascended the sides of Pelion (Ossa); and they govern themselves, like their ancestors, by their protoyeros (primates, elders), and their own magistrates. Twice the Mussulmans of Larissa attempted to scale their rocks, and twice were they repulsed by hands which dropped the shuttle to seize the musket.

"Every arm, even those of the children, is employed in the factories; whilst the men dye the cotton, the women prepare and spin. There are twenty-four factories. This yarn found its way into Germany, and was disposed of at Buda, Vienna, Leipsic, Dresden, Anspach, and Bareuth. The Ambelakiot merchants had houses of their own in all those places. These houses belonged to distinct associations at Ambelakia. The competition thus established reduced very considerably the common profits; they proposed, therefore, to unite themselves under one central commercial administration. The lowest shares in this joint-stock company were between £600 and £700, and the highest were restricted, that the capitalists might not swallow up all the profits. The workmen subscribed their little profits, and, uniting in societies, purchased single shares; and besides their capital, their *labour was reckoned* in the general amount; they received their share of the profits accordingly, and abundance was soon spread through the whole community.

"Never was a society established upon such economical principles, and never were fewer hands employed for the transaction of such a mass of business.

"The greatest harmony long reigned in the association; the directors were disinterested, the correspondents zealous, and the workmen docile and laborious. The company's profits increased every day on a capital which had rapidly become immense; each investment realised a profit of from 60 to 100 per cent., all of which was distributed, in just proportions, to capitalists and *workmen*, according to capital and industry. The shares had increased tenfold."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Urquhart's estimate of the causes of failure gives, first, "the too great extension of the municipal body, its consequent loss of activity and control, and the evasion of responsibility by

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iv. p. 46, of his work named.



the managers ; secondly, the absence of judicial authority to settle in their origin disputes and litigated interests, which, in the absence of law, could only be decided by the violence of faction.

"That the exclusion of the workmen from a due influence in the administration, and share in the profits, was the real cause of the breaking up of the commercial association, is established by the fact of the workmen separating themselves into small societies."

That is a very important statement Mr. Urquhart makes, namely, that "the exclusion of the workmen from a due influence in the administration and share in the profits was the real cause of the breaking up of the association."

The Ambelakiots had, however, many points worthy of modern notice. They were citizens as well as co-operators, and fought when occasion required for independence. They understood the theory of industrial partnerships better than any modern companies do, and profits were divided between capital and labour long before modern discussions arose upon that subject.

More modern instances, however, claim our attention. No one should accuse Socialists of wanting in intrepidity when they settled down on the banks of the Wabash of Indiana, which the much-enduring German celibates were deserting.

New Harmony—a name never applicable to it, but inherited—consisted of 30,000 acres of land, purchased by Mr. Owen in April, 1825. In 1822 it was peopled by 700 persons, who had previously occupied a back settlement in Pennsylvania, near Pittsburg, and were chiefly German emigrants. They had had for their spiritual teacher and temporal director Mr. Rapp. They were ignorant, bigoted, despised intellectual attainments, and were celibates. They greatly enriched themselves, and might have multiplied their wealth, as we have seen, had they multiplied themselves. "New Harmony" stood in a thickly-wooded country on the banks of the Wabash and about thirty miles from the mouth of that river. The site of New Harmony was generally flat for about a mile and a half from the river ; but the neighbouring hills were covered with vineyards and orchards. The Wabash here was an ample stream, winding its course in front of the town and

beneath the luxuriant and lofty woods on the opposite banks of the Illinois. The town was well laid out in straight and spacious streets, crossing each other at right angles, after the manner of modern American towns. There were excellent wells in this Wabash settlement, and public ovens at convenient distances from each other. There were well-built granaries, barns, and factories, and a pretty village church, the white steeple of which was pleasantly seen from afar. Mr. Owen explained his intended plan of proceedings in the House of Representatives at Washington, an opportunity which would not be accorded to the angel Gabriel of speaking in the Houses of Parliament in London, if he contemplated founding a settlement on the Thames. In three months Mr. Owen was joined by upwards of 900 individuals, which further increased, and notice had to be given to prevent more persons coming.

Lord Brougham, being asked (about 1826) to give his opinion of schemes of industrial societies, answered : "Co-operation will, by and by, do for the worst, but it must begin with picked men." The Indiana communists were not of this description. In fact, they were advertised for. Notice was given that all ready to join the new system of society might make their way to the banks of the Wabash, and all who came were accepted, just as though you could begin the New World with a job lot. As was to be expected, the men of good sense were ultimately overwhelmed by the mass of wayward adherents, composed, in the words of Mr. Horace Greeley, for the most part of "the conceited, the crotchety, the selfish, the headstrong, the pugnacious, the unappreciated, the played-out, the idle, and the good-for-nothing generally, who, discovering themselves utterly out of place and at a discount in the world as it is, rashly conclude that they are exactly fitted for the world as it ought to be." Nevertheless, the men of good sense ruled at first, and prevailed intermittingly throughout. A committee was appointed to govern this heterogeneous assemblage of 1,000 Republicans. It is clear they had business instincts, for the first thing they did was to pass a resolution "that no spirituous liquors shall be retailed in New Harmony;" and this resolution has been repeated in every great co-operative society down to this day.

For the first forty years of their career no clergyman, with a character to lose, would guarantee them Christian charity. St. Peter was apprised to have a sharp eye upon them if they came to his gate. Yet these Socialists were not wanting in self-denial, which the very elect, who sat in judgment upon them, often failed to practise; and they were resolute that Co-operation should always mean Temperance. They had none of the teetotalers' tenderness for wilful inebriates, treating them with more respect than the self-sustained, self-respecting, temperate man. They regarded intemperance as uneconomical. They knew that drunkenness is madness at large, and in countless families children and women are shut up with these maniacs, and live in daily jeopardy and terror. It was better to have a tiger or a snake in a community than a drunkard. You could kill the beast or the reptile, but the drunkard might kill you. It would not pay to manage him in a community. Some knew the inebriate in every stage. In the first he is amusing. Playwriters make merry with him; comic artists put his foolishness into demoralising cartoons. In the second stage his officious good-nature is succeeded by suspicions, which make his society a nuisance and a peril. In the third stage he stabs those who oppose him, or does it on surmise of his own, against which there is neither warning nor defence. The foulest suspicions grow real to the inebriate. In some cases daughters hear infamous accusations upon testimony apparently authentic. Waste and violence mark the days of horror and sorrow in the household. Little children undergo frights which affect their reason (as doctors know). Working men and women have been hanged for murder which mere self-defence against drunken provocation has forced upon them. The most brilliant men, the sweetest and most self-denying women, whom suffering, weakness, or sorrow bows low, until nervous exhaustion befalls, come to this dreadful end. There is no land of refuge, no escape for them. The fatal temptation is ever in their sight. At every corner of every street that which to them is the accursed spirit is blazoned. Advertisements in newspaper or magazine carries the dreadful information where can be got the dainty drink of death. The co-operators had knowledge enough of the causes of sin to pity the poor wretch on the inclined plane, but they would have no inclined



plane laid down in their stores. There have been drunken saints and drunken sceptics, whom both sides have deplored, but a drunken co-operator would be a nuisance, a scandal, and a fool. Where temperance in use is the observance, moderation is expected as naturally as courtesy or truth, and immoderation held as infamous.

In New Harmony the religious difficulty was made to submit to the co-operative conditions of liberty, conscience, and criticism. The different sects ultimately met in church and hall, attending as they chose, when they chose, and upon whom they chose ; and preachers of all denominations had free liberty to teach, and discussions are mentioned<sup>1</sup> as having occurred after the morning services.

As late as 1842, New Harmony, in Indiana, was the subject of report in the *New Moral World*. Robert Dale Owen was there at that time, and stated in a speech that many of those present, himself among the number, hoped to live and die in New Harmony. They expected to leave their children, their daughters as well as their sons, behind them, the future inhabitants of the place. Mr. R. D. Owen was occupied in replying to the objections of ministers of religion. The co-operators would have certainly done twice as much as they accomplished but for the time spent in answering clerical critics, who had nothing whatever to do with their business. Mr. R. D. Owen, who had not delivered a single lecture on the subject of religion for ten years, condescended to answer one Rev. B. Halstead, who all that time had been lecturing upon it every Sunday. It cannot be said that these social reformers did nothing for the future. They spent their time in writing papers on theological subjects, long enough to fill the bookshelves of posterity. On their own ground ministers of religion were to be regarded with respect so long as they were unimputative ; but religion, being an affair of individual conscience, for which individuals are made responsible in the future, and not the minister, he had no right to dictate opinions for which another had to answer.

The absence of Mr. Robert Owen during the years when personal inspiration and training were most important, was a great disadvantage to the community.

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative Magazine*, 1826, p. 50.

Abram Combe deserves to be ranked with Mr. Owen for the cost to himself with which he strove to prove co-operative life practicable. He published a periodical informing the public of the progress of the Orbiston community. It was a small neatly-printed paper, which he named *The Register of the First Society of Adherents to Divine Revelation at Orbiston*, which was not very civil to all the other Christian societies, which for eighteen centuries have regarded themselves as being the same description of persons. Mr. Combe professed to derive his principles from Mr. Owen, and appeared to treat the principal things Mr. Owen had said as discoveries. These discoveries Abram Combe had the merit of stating in his own way, and stating very well; and some thought in a much more acceptable form than the master had put them. *The Register* was the least tiresome and most sensibly written of any of the publications of the class. There were practical articles about the situation and prospects of the place, the views of the inmates, the different occupations, diversions, and departments; the proceedings of the theatre which was opened in Orbiston. Letters, when they were good, were introduced, and extracts also from private letters when they contained passages publicly interesting. Notices of co-operative publications were given, and of experiments elsewhere, commonly done in a very pleasant spirit. Lectures were reported, some of which must have been well worth hearing since at this time they are interesting reading.

In 1826 the Orbiston Community buildings were begun on the 18th of March. An average of 100 men were employed. The art ideas of Mr. Abram Combe were of the most sterile utilitarian order. He held that "it ought always to be borne in mind that the *sole use* and end of domestic accommodation is to protect the *body* from painful sensations." "To me," he said, "it has a slight appearance of irrationality to seek *mental* pleasure from such a source, seeing that liberty, security, and knowledge, united with social intercourse, and confirmed by the affection and esteem of *all* with whom we are in contact, constitute the only source from which the wants of the mind can be supplied." The excellent gentleman must have been born without any sense of art in his soul. Every longing for beauty in his nature must have been satisfied by the sight of mortar and whitewash. What a genius poor-law commissioners missed in

Abram Combe ! He would have been the Pugin of bare Bethels and union workhouses. He was wise in proposing the plainest conveniences until prosperity was attained, but he need not have struck his harp in praise of naked monotony. A building was described as possessing a centre—left centre and left wing—right centre and right wing. The left centre contained about 120 private rooms. The whole building was plain, was all of hewn stone, and was said to have “a rather magnificent appearance,” which criticism, after what we know of the architect, must have been written by a gravedigger. It is, however, but just to add that the *Glasgow Chronicle* of that day said that “the rooms intended for the inmates were neat and even elegant.” If so there must have been some departure from Mr. Combe’s principle of dreariness.

Orbiston was near Hamilton. The funds for the settlement were raised by a joint-stock company, and were divided into two hundred shares of £250 each, paid in quarterly instalments of £10 ; Mr. Combe, of course, being the giant contributor.

The community buildings are described as situated on the banks of the Calder, at that place the river being but a paltry, quick, shallow, mill stream, but the banks beautiful. The visitor approaching the place saw only a tall white building, covered with blue slates, standing entirely by itself, without a house or tree to keep it company. The general feature of the spot was flat, but surrounded on all sides by near or distant, high mountainous scenery. On arriving at the building one found it to be plain, of great extent, and devoid of every ornament—yet the aim, the zeal, the sacrifices of the promoters, and the hopes they inspired, made these places sacred.

Mr. Combe was described as a stout-built, middle-aged, farmer-looking man, giving no indication of the general knowledge he was understood to possess ; known in Edinburgh as a sharp-eyed tanner—that being his business—well understanding the art of pursuing the “main chance,” of a cynical turn of mind, satirical and vivacious beyond either of his eminent brothers. He visited New Lanark in 1820. Though he was then thirty-five years of age, he experienced an entire “change of mind,” as complete, remarkable, and salutary as any recorded in the annals of religious conversion.

Some of the many persons visiting Orbiston were naturally



disposed to make some compensation to the community for the time of the members consumed in taking visitors round, and they made offer of money on account of the attendants placed at their disposal. This was resented in a dignified and foolish article, for the community might have been eaten up, either in food or time, by visitors—a few curious to learn, but more curious to ridicule. A charge for attendance in showing people round, at so much per hour, would have been welcome to the common fund. However, a very sensible suggestion was made, namely, that visitors who felt desirous of serving the place should purchase some article of its produce.

In the *Co-operative Magazine* of this period (1826) were prudently published several calculations of the proportion of the agriculturists, mechanics, and other workmen who should be included in a community, according to the quality of land which was to be occupied. There were also statements of the conditions to which members were to conform in the Orbiston and New Harmony communities. These calculations and conditions are not devoid of historic interest as showing what conceptions were entertained of the art of association, by two such eminent leaders and students of it as Robert Owen and Abram Combe. But it would be unfair in the historian to waylay the reader with twenty pages of these technical details.

The Orbiston estate consisted of 290 acres, for which the serious sum of £20,000 was paid. The land was cold and poor, and has been judged to be not worth half the money; and an additional £20,000 was expended on buildings. An ill-assorted random collection of most unsuitable persons flocked to the spot, which speedily acquired from the surrounding population the emphatic name of "Babylon." At its breaking up the land and buildings were sold for £16,000. But for Mr. George Combe, who, at the death of his brother Abram, forced on the total destruction of the concern, the foundry, with its "forge and water-wheel" might yet have remained to waken the echoes of that "romantic dell." Orbiston was ridding itself of its idlers and its unsuitable members—it was gradually consolidating itself, and would, but for the forcible legal interference of the great phrenologist, have righted itself.<sup>1</sup>

Orbiston was nearer succeeding than other European experi-

<sup>1</sup> *New Moral World*, vol. vii. p. 995, January 4, 1840.

ments. Had Mr. Abram Combe lived, his practical sense and fine example, no doubt, would have sustained the community. He was quite right in wasting no money on ornament in the erection of the earlier buildings, but he was wrong in writing against ornament; true ornament is art, and art is pleasure; and pleasure in art is refinement, and refinement is the grace of life. It was of no consequence that the buildings were plain at first. The enthusiastic would be quite content if the buildings were wholesome, and they might have been so contrived that the addition of comeliness could have been given when there was money to pay for it. Mr. Combe died of his own enthusiasm. Unfitted for much field-work, he persisted in it excessively, even after his lungs were affected. When what he had done was explained to him, he regretted that the physiology of health had not been taught to him in lieu of other knowledge, which could not now save him. He was a man of fine parts and many personal accomplishments, and a martyr of Co-operation.

Subsequently Mr. William Thompson arose, with whose name the reader is already familiar. He had a definite scheme of social life in his mind, which he had given the best years of his life to describe and define, and which he left his fortune to forward.

In those days it was, and still is, difficult to leave money for purposes of progress, not of an orthodox character. Religious judges at once confiscated the bequest on the ground of alleged immorality of purpose. Any persons to whom the money might revert could successfully plead the lunacy of the testator. Nobody believed in the sanity of any one who sought unknown improvement in an untrodden way. The only way was to give the means while you lived. If testators could have been persuaded of this, some projected communities never attempted would have been heard of, and some commenced would not have been lost.

Mr. Thompson died in March, 1833, and left freehold estates to the value of £8,000 or £10,000 to thirteen trustees, to be applied in loans to communities, the purchase of shares in communities, and the reprinting for gratuitous distribution such of Mr. Thompson's works as might be supposed to further co-operative objects. The heirs-

at-law disputed the will, and collections had to be made to defend it. A plea of insanity was set up against Mr. Thompson. Ultimately a decision was obtained in the Rolls Court, Dublin, when the counsel for the heirs brought forward the same imaginary charges of intended sexual immorality in community arrangements which were brought forward thirty years later in the Rolls Court, London, with respect to the Queenwood community. The Cork case ended in the court taking possession of the funds.

In September, 1831, announcement was made of a co-operative community being established in Cork, under the influence of Mr. Thompson—it was intended to consist of two thousand individuals. Two years before his death a Congress was held in Manchester, May, 1831, for the purpose of arranging the immediate formation of a community. The first Birmingham Co-operative Society had published, in "Carpenter's Political Letter," a recommendation that the incipient co-operative community should be upon the plan laid down by Mr. William Thompson, and that application should be made to 199 other co-operative societies to elect one member of community each, and supply him with £30, in order that the community should start with £6,000. Mr. Owen declined to be a party to the pettiness of writing to two hundred societies only. He proposed a committee for universal correspondence, and refused to have his name associated with any committee which was for making a beginning with a smaller sum than £240,000. Mr. Thompson had come up to London, with other gentlemen resident at a distance, to promote practical operations.<sup>1</sup> At the Manchester Congress, he wisely urged that they should commence with a small experiment in proportion to their possible means, and the Congress was disposed to advance £6,000 to him, when it could be raised upon their scheme. A document was agreed to in which his plan was recommended, but Mr. Owen, saying that £6,000 or £20,000 would be insufficient, discouraged the attempt.

In the Cork community, which Mr. Thompson meditated, entire freedom of thought and expression on all subjects were to prevail, guided by regard for the feelings of others; and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Thompson's speech, London Congress, 1832.



entire freedom of action, not interfering with similar freedom in others, were amongst the mutually guaranteed rights of every member of this community. Religion was declared to be the peculiar concern of the individual alone. Women were to be entitled to equal means of improvement and enjoyment, and to be equally eligible with men to all offices to which their inclination or talents might lead.

Besides his famous Scotch convert, Abram Combe, Mr. Owen made an Irish convert hardly less remarkable, who founded an Irish community which attained greater success than that of Orbiston. It was in 1830 that Mr. Vandeleur, of Ralahine, devoted 618 acres to the uses of a modified community on Mr. Owen's plan. His tenantry were of the lowest order of Irish poor, discontented, disorderly, and vicious. Mr. Vandeleur had heard Mr. Owen's lectures in Dublin, and was persuaded of the suitability of his scheme of co-operative agriculture for Ireland, and he did not hesitate to trust his fortune in order to verify the sincerity of his convictions. His expectation of success was very high, and, although he proposed to apply the co-operative principle to the most unfavourable state of society in the world, it is admitted on all hands that his experiment succeeded.

Strange to say, the most important application of Co-operation to agriculture has occurred in the restless land of potatoes and Whiteboys, amid the bogs of Ralahine. Mr. William Pare published a history of this Irish experiment. The sort of treatment to which farm labourers had been subjected on the Vandeleur estate there was not calculated to promote good-will. A reaper on a hot harvest day paused to get a drink of water from a can, when the steward kicked it over, declaring that he would not have water there as an excuse for the reapers wasting their time. No wonder that a few wandering shots flew about this estate : and after better treatment set in, the men went out shooting as a precautionary measure, but when they saw good homesteads put up for them, a share of the produce of their labour secured to them, peace, and even prosperity, reigned in that wretched district. This patch of Irish communism is the only one that ever flourished. It did not come to grief of itself ; its proprietor ended it. Though a gentleman of good family, Mr John Scott Vandeleur

was a gambler, and lost the co-operative farms and everything else in a dice-box. He fled himself, and passed into outer darkness, and was never more heard of by men. There being no equitable land laws, such as Mr. Gladstone devised, for Ireland, the co-operators had no claims for improvement of stock, and the "New Systemites," as they were called in Ireland, vanished also. There is no doubt that the "system" answered among the worst-used people, and under the worst circumstances imaginable. The Rev. Francis Trench, brother of the Archbishop of Dublin, visited the "New Systemites," and not only expressed, but wrote his approval of what he saw. The society had made itself rules. One was, that "no member be expected to perform any service or work but such as is agreeable to his or her feelings." Irish human nature must not be of bad material, since both honest and disagreeable work was daily done, and done cheerfully. One day a mail coach traveller found a man up to his middle in water repairing a dam.

"Are you working by yourself?" inquired the traveller.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Where is your steward?"

"We have no steward."

"Who is your master?"

"We have no master. We are on a new system."

"Then who sent you to do this work?"

"The committee," replied the man in the dam.

"Who is the committee?" asked the mail coach visitor.

"Some of the members."

"What members do you mean?"

"The ploughman and labourers who are appointed by us as a committee. I belong to the New Systemites."

When Mr. Craig, the co-operative steward, first went among these men, who had shot the previous steward, they sent him an interesting sketch of a skull and crossbones, and an intimation that they intended to put him to bed under the "daisy quilt." As he went along the road, the people who did not know him saluted him with the kind country greeting of "God be with you." One of his labourers told him that he should always reply in Irish—"Tharah-ma-dhoel." Accordingly Mr. Craig answered everybody "Tharah-ma-

dhoel"; but he observed that his rejoinder did not make him popular, when a friend explained to him that "Tharah-ma-dhoel" meant "Go to the Devil." The man who taught this dangerous answer became one of the best members of the society; and once, when the co-operative steward was supposed to be lost behind the Crattan Wood, he met "Tharah-ma-dhoel" looking for him, and on being asked why he had come out on that errand, answered—

"We thought you were lost in the Bog Mountain."

"Suppose I was lost, what then?" said the steward.

"Sure, sir," answered Tharah-ma-dhoel, "if we lost you we should lose the system."

Mr. Craig deserves words of honour for his courage in undertaking the post of steward, seeing that his predecessor had been shot, and that the proprietor, Mr. Vandeleur, had been under the protection of an armed force. Between Terry-Alts, White Feet, Black Feet factions, and a "Tharah-ma-dhoel" set of labourers, Mr. Craig had a very unpleasant prospect before him.

The government of the colony was absolute in Mr. Vandeleur, who retained the right of summary dismissal of any person brought upon the estate of whom he disapproved. Yet during the three years and a half the Clare community (it was situated in the county of Clare) lasted, he never had occasion to use this summary power. It would not have been very wonderful if he had, seeing that the members of the community were elected by ballot among the peasants of Ralahine. The business of the farm was regulated by a committee, also elected by ballot. The committee assembled every evening, and appointed to each man his work for the following day. There was no inequality established among them. The domestic offices, usually performed by servants, were assigned to the members under seventeen years of age.

It seems quite incredible that the simple and reasonable form of government should supersede the government of the bludgeon and the blunderbuss—the customary mode by which Irish labourers of that day regulated their industrial affairs. Yet peace and prosperity prevailed through an arrangement of equity. From this quiet community, established in the midst of terror and murder, Mr. Vandeleur received back in full all



the money he advanced for the wages of the labourers ; £200 a-year interest on the working capital, the stock, and farm implements ; and £700 a year rent.

What induced the labourers to work with such profitable zeal and good will was, that the members of all ages above seventeen received an equal share in the division of profits over the above payments. Besides, a co-operative store was established similar to the one at New Lanark, whence they obtained provisions of good quality and nearly cost price. Pure food, honest weight, and reduced prices filled them with astonishment. None had known such a state of things before. None had conceived the possibility of it. The members ate at one table, which saved much expense in cooking food and serving meals. People who had always lived in doubt whether they should have a meal at all, made no scruple of eating with one another when a well-spread table was before them. In addition, care was bestowed on the education of their children. The school was conducted upon purely secular principles, and the results were highly valued by the parents. As was the habit of communities, spirituous liquors were not permitted on the estate, and neither was smoking, which was gratuitous and petulant prohibition.

Had the Ralahine farm continued, arrangements would have been made for enabling the members to acquire the property and hold the community as their own, by common capital.

It was in the "enthusiastic period" when this Clare community flourished, and needed enthusiasm to carry social ideas to these desperate districts. Communism should no longer be counted sentimental, since it did the stout-hearted practical work it achieved in Ireland. It is a thousand pities, all counted, that Vandeleur was a gambler, as otherwise the merriest community in the world would have been established in the pleasant land of Erin. Men who taught their new steward to reply to the pious greetings of the peasantry by telling them to go to the devil, had an infinity of fun in them. In racier humour than this, and in harmless drollery and wit, the Irish surpass all tribes of men ; and communism in their hands would have been industry, song, and laughter.

Yielding to a necessity always adverse, experiments were

next attempted in the fens of Cambridgeshire. The projector, Mr. Hodgson, was a handsome and lusty farmer, who heard from clerical adversaries that a community might serve harem as well as public purposes; and as he had some land, a little money, and plausibility of address, he turned out as a peripatetic orator in favour of beginning the new world in his native fens of Cambridgeshire. No one suspected his object, he was regarded as an eager advocate for realising the new system of society. Mr. Owen at once set his face against the ingenious schemer, whose hasty and indefinite proceedings he disapproved. Mr. Owen's high-minded instincts always led him to associate only with men of honour and good promise. He went down to Manea Fen, the name of the site chosen, and, having acquaintance with landowners of the neighbourhood, was soon able to properly estimate the qualifications of the new communist leader. Some gentlemen farmers, who knew Hodgson's antecedents and unfitness for trust, did Mr. Owen the service of telling him the truth. Mr. Fleming, the editor of the *New Moral World* wisely declined, on business grounds, to sanction the Manea Fen project. It did not add to the repute of the scheme that Mr. Rowbotham, afterwards known as "Parallox," made himself the advocate of the discountenanced projector. Many honest, and some able, men, naturally thinking that the discontent with Mr. Hodgson's plans originated in narrowness, and impatient to try their fortunes on the land themselves, went down and endeavoured to put the place in working order. Buildings were erected and many residents were for a time established there; but the chief of the affair soon found that he had misconceived the character of those whom he had attracted, and they soon abandoned it. Those who had the smallest means suffered most, because they remained the longest, being unable to transfer themselves. The *Working Bee*, the organ of the association, edited by Mr. James Thompson, had animation, literary merit, and the advantage of appealing to all who were impatient of delay, and not well instructed in the dangers of prematurity.

It was in August, 1838, that Mr. E. T. Craig made the first announcement that Mr. Hodgson, who had the suspicious address of Brimstone Hill, Upwell, had an estate of two

hundred acres within a few miles of Wisbech, which he intended to devote to a community. Mr. Hodgson addressed the readers of the *Moral World* as "Fellow Beings," the only time in which that abstract designation was applied to them. The editor prudently prefaced his remarks upon the communications by quoting the saying of the Town Clerk of Ephesus, "Let us do nothing rashly." Mr. William Hodgson had been a sailor in his younger days—and many things else subsequently. He was acting in the character of the farmer when he invented the Manea Fen community. It was mortgaged, but this did not prevent him offering to sell it to the Socialist party. This Fen Farm consisted of four fifty-acre lots, divided by dykes, as is the Fen country plan. The dykes acted as drains also. Three fifties lay together, the fourth was somewhat distant—half a mile. Twenty-four cottages, twelve in a row built back to back, were single-room shanties. There was a dining shanty, which would accommodate one hundred people.

There were brave, energetic men attracted to this place. To set up a paper, which was one of the features of the Fen Farm, was to enter the ranks of aspiring cities. The members were "working bees" in the best sense, and were capable of success anywhere if moderate industry and patience could command it.

Besides being disastrous to individuals, this Fen community was a hindrance to the greater scheme of the Queenwood community, which had then been projected, and which represented what of unity, wisdom, and capacity the Socialist party had.

The possibility of co-operation aiding in new forms of social life was next destined to be illustrated in an unexpected manner, and by a very unlikely person—namely, Mr. Feargus O'Connor. He soon became master of English Chartism; and he and countrymen of his carried it clear away from all the moorings to which the English leaders would have held it secure. They vehemently protested against social reform as digressive and impossible. Against all attempts to obtain property for the purposes of community they urged, you cannot get land—laws of primogeniture and entail forbid. If law did let you get land, government would not let you



keep it ; and if law and government consented, how can those get land who cannot get bread ?

Mr. O'Connor was a man of candour, had a mind susceptible of new ideas, and ultimately came himself to project a "Co-operative Land Scheme." He gave to it at one time the name of "Co-operative." It was subsequently known as the National Land Scheme. It was through contact with the social advocates that the Chartist leaders turned their attention to life upon the land. He bought four estates and contracted for two others—O'Connorville, near Rickmansworth, formerly bore the name of Heringsgate, Herts ; Snigsend, near Staunton, Gloucester ; Lowbands, near Tewkesbury, on the borders of Gloucester and Worcester ; Minster Lovell, near Whitney, Oxfordshire ; Bromsgrove, Worcestershire ; and Mathon, near Great Malvern. The purchase of the two last was not completed. O'Connorville cost £9,736 ; Lowbands, £18,903 ; Minster Lovell, £22,978 ; Snigsend, £27,237 ; Dodford, £12,046 ; and there was a deposit on Mathon of £2,005. Mathon, however, did not come into the occupation of the company.

There was confusion in making the allotments, which were given by ballot. They fell, of course, often to the unprepared and unfit. The properties, owing to an ill-devised mode of purchase, came into Chancery. Nevertheless, there remained several persons upon these estates who lived profitably upon their holdings. Had the occupants had sufficient capital to enable them to subsist while they built their habitations and gathered in their first crops—had the holdings been of four acres instead of two acres only, the scheme might have been of lasting benefit to many persons. The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* sent (1875) a special commissioner, Mr. Longstaffe, to visit all these places. He recounts how the shares were fixed as low as twenty-six shillings each. The member who had paid up four shares (five pounds four shillings) was entitled to ballot for two acres. It was assumed that good arable land might be rented in the most fertile parts of the country at fifteen shillings an acre, or bought outright at twenty-five years' purchase at eighteen pounds fifteen shillings an acre. As soon as the share capital realised £5,000, a hundred and twenty acres were to be bought to locate sixty persons on two-

acre holdings, and leave a balance of £2,750; this would allow to each occupant a sum of forty-five pounds sixteen and eightpence with which to start on his enterprise. It was believed that thirty pounds would be sufficient to build a commodious and comfortable cottage, and that the fifteen pounds remaining would provide implements, stock, seeds, and subsistence until the land became sustaining to its occupiers. It was thought that the allotments with dwellings might be leased for ever to the members at an annual rental of five pounds. The Chartist land cry was: "A beautiful cottage and four acres, with thirty pounds to work it, for a prepayment of five pounds four shillings."

When the society had the amazing number of 70,000 members, the total sum they subscribed was a little over £36,000. It took £78,000 to locate fewer than two hundred and fifty persons. Seventy thousand members spread all over Great Britain involved unforeseen cost to register—it was found to require £6,000 to put their names upon the books. The cost of land, the expense of conducting the great society on Mr. O'Connor's plan, actually required an enormous sum of money and time to carry out. When the subject was examined before a Parliamentary committee, Mr. Finlason, the actuary of the National Debt, calculated that it would require twenty-one millions to place the whole seventy thousand members on the land, and that, supposing Mr. O'Connor's most sanguine scheme of profit could be realised, it would require every minute of three centuries to get all the shareholders on their holdings.

Thus the politicians failed, as no social reformers ever did, however, some advantages accrued from their efforts. The attention of the great mass of working-class politicians, who were mere politicians and nothing more, was turned to the fact that progress had a social as well as political side, and Mr. Ernest Jones, instead of opposing Co-operation in public debates, became an advocate of it.

The last of the English attempts at community to be recounted here was the one at Queenwood, in Hampshire. This was the greatest effort of the kind made in this country.

For more than twenty years before it began the disciples of Socialism had been forecasting the means of a decisive

experiment in England. Rich men had believed in community as a reasonable commercial speculation. Benevolent men with a turn for statesmanship had believed in these home colony schemes as a means of easier and better government of the people. After the rise of the socialistic agitation the working people believed in community as a means of self-help and self-government. Their idea was that moderate labour on the part of the many, and moderate attainments in the science of society on the part of the few, would bring success.

The Socialists understood by communism simply a society in which the fruits of intellect, art, and industry should be diffused by consent, poverty made impossible, and ordinary crime unnecessary. The laws of the universe were not exclusive. Light and air were common. Life and death were common. In the hour of his birth the young prince has to scream for air like any infantine pauper; and unceremonious Death walks into the parlour of the gentleman without sending in his card. It had been proposed in Parliament that galleries of art should be open to the gaze of the shoeblack as well as to the connoisseur. Books of rare value were being made accessible to all. Fire offices insured the cottage or the mansion. The careless were made as secure as the careful. Life insurance was a form of equality. The strong and the temperate were made to use their prolonged lives to pay up premiums which go to the progeny of the weak and the reckless. The virtuous and the vicious, the base and the noble, had been all declared equal in the sight of the law. The same police watch over the life of the scoundrel and the patriot. Before civilisation began, the weak had to take care of themselves. Now the feeble and the strong, the coward and the brave, are equally protected. That personal daring which made the inspiration of Homeric song, which made Sparta a name of energy through all time, which makes the blood tingle over the pages of Sir Walter Scott, is no longer a daily requisite. A man need neither carry arms nor use them. A set of men are paid to defend him. An old warrior of the romantic days would rather die than call the police. If a man gets into a disputation he is not allowed to settle it in honest hot rage, but must refer his quarrel to the decision



of a cold-blooded magistrate, who will probably fine him for his fervour. How the brave were abashed—how courage blushed with shame—how the pride of manliness was stung, when craven, cringing law first put valour down. There is plenty of exercise for courage without expending it in broils and bloodshed. The equality of the law conduces to justice—and the equality of competence may lead to security and morality.

A Hall of Science was erected in Rockingham Street, Sheffield, in 1839: a commodious and handsome building for the time. Mr. Joseph Smith had erected the first at Salford, less pretentious, but a pleasant structure, costing £850, and capable of holding six hundred persons. The Liverpool Hall, a building of mark for those days, cost £5,000. The London Hall, in John Street, Tottenham Court Road, cost £3,000. Lawrence Street Chapel, Birmingham, built or held by the Southcotians, was bought for £800. More than £22,000 was spent in one year in securing "Social Institutions," and Mr. Pare, with that business wisdom in which he excelled, had a deed drawn on the model of that by which Methodist chapels are vested in the Conference. Had the community plan at Queenwood succeeded, a powerful social organisation had existed in England. A good-looking chapel was held in Glasgow, in Great Hamilton Street. The present writer, the last of the Social Missionaries, officiated in 1845. In other places halls were continuously occupied. The most famous and costly erection was that of the Hall of Science in Campfield, Manchester, which has since been purchased for the City Free Library—the most honourable use to which any of these halls have come. Dr. John Watts was chiefly or mainly instrumental in promoting this welcome destination of it. In the early Queenwood days upwards of one hundred thousand members of Socialist Societies could be counted upon for Co-operation. The Community Society contributions were fixed at threepence a week from each member. As Mr. Owen calculated that £250,000 was the lowest sum which would enable a successful experiment to be conducted, the prospect of collecting it by threepence a week was a distant one. The hope of increasing the fund more rapidly led to a recurrence to the old co-operative store plan, and a store for

the sale of tea and groceries was opened at the Institution in John Street, London. Thus the necessity of self-created capital brought back the store, for years extinct in London. In 1837, when the National Community Friendly Society was formed, the subscription was fixed at one shilling a week, and those only who had subscribed £50 were declared eligible to go upon the land. In 1838, the members amounted to four hundred. In 1839, £1,200 were collected in this way, which in two hundred years or more would furnish the £240,000 Mr. Owen required. Nothing discouraged by this circumstance, a year before, Messrs. Wm. Clegg, John Finch, Joseph Smith, by one of the formidable ukases from the Central Board, were instructed to inquire for an estate, capable of sustaining a colony of at least five hundred individuals. There was some idea of going Fenwards again in search of a site for the new world. They actually made an offer for an estate in Norfolk, for which they were to pay £11,500.

The Community Committee contracted to buy the Wretton estates, near Wisbech, of Mr. James Hill, but, as that gentleman had social and training views of his own, he stipulated that he should have a paramount right to carry those out. As this would confuse the public judgment of what was done by two different sets of regenerators acting in the same field, the purchase was not proceeded with. After much inquiry, other negotiations, and more misgiving, land was rented in Hants.

The estate consisted of two farms, one of 301 acres, named Queenwood, tithe free; the other 232 acres, extra-parochial, named Buckholt. The annual rent was £350, having been fined down from £375 by payment of £750. The society had the power to further fine down the rent to £300, £250, and £200 on making three payments of £1,500 each at three successive periods. Complaints were made that the land selected at Tytherly was unsuited in several respects. It was unfruitful, it was inaccessible for those needing to frequent it; it was too far from markets.

Even in London, where the vast number of people living together necessitates a certain tolerance from the impossibility of noticing the peculiarities of one another, it has been difficult to obtain a site for a hall of science. In the town

of Bury, in Lancashire, chiefly possessed by the house of Derby, who were not favourably disposed to Unitarians, it was impossible for a long period of years to obtain a strip of ground on which to erect a Unitarian church; and those enterprising religionists were under the necessity of waiting until they could convert a gentleman who happened to possess a little land, when they obtained a site. When the colony projectors have succeeded in securing some spot, it has generally been one with many disadvantages, and conceded to them because nothing better could be done with the place. The calculation of the owners has sometimes been that the social occupants would, after spending all their capital in improving the land, be obliged to relinquish it, when it would return, gratuitously improved, into their hands.

The most important accession which was made at this time was that of Mr. William Galpin, a banker, of Salisbury, who wrote to the *New Moral World* a modest, comprehensive, business-like letter, saying, "he regretted that Mr. Owen did not intend being himself a resident in the community formed in his name"; arguing properly that "he who knew most should be at hand to give effect to what he knew, and that he thought a joint-stock fund was possible to be formed for the especial purpose of advancing the practical objects of the home colony contemplated." The editor, who did not at all comprehend the quality of his correspondent, answered with more confidence than judgment, that it was not probable that much could be done in way of a joint-stock fund, till the members of the proposed community had proved the success of their undertaking; which meant that when they had succeeded without money they would be able to get it. The unseeing and sanguine editor argued "they would get more than they knew how to use."

In 1841 the buildings were commenced at Tytherly, from the designs of Mr. Hansom, a clever architect, who had a sympathy with social views. He had erected a Philosophical Museum in Leicester, not distinguished for gracefulness of design, but it was never completed as he intended it. His best known erection, the Birmingham Town Hall, was for many years considered the handsomest town hall in the kingdom. He was a man of mechanical resource. He was



the inventor of the hansom cab, and some machines which were successful. It was probably through Mr. Pare's municipal connection with Birmingham that he became architect of the Queenwood Hall at Tytherly. A sketch of it appeared in the *New Moral World* for October 9, 1841, about the time of its completion.

The building was a pleasant semi-baronial structure, and had a certain stateliness. The manner of the erection was more creditable than many churches. It was built with the care that befitted a sacred edifice. The parts out of sight were finished as scrupulously as those that met the eye. Owing to Mr. Galpin's wise and wholesome sense of thoroughness, the laths which formed the partitions were of the best quality, and the nails used in the obscurest part of the building were the best that could be had. There was nothing hidden that was mean. It is one of the pleasant recollections of the place, that its directors endeavoured to make it honest throughout. Seven or eight hundred pounds were spent in making roads and promenades around it—spacious and enduring. The old Romans would have respected them. Even the kitchen and basement rooms, used by the members for evening meetings, were wainscoted with mahogany, many feet high. Comfort and grace were consulted as far as means permitted in everything.

To the credit of the English communists they were no Barebones party. Had they succeeded in making a community, it had been a pleasant one. They were not afraid of art, and beauty had no terrors for them. Mr. Bate, who was an artist, and who ultimately gave his fortune for the advancement of the Queenwood experiment, sent eight original drawings in water colours, framed and glazed, as a beginning towards forming a gallery of drawings. Mr. Devonshire Saull meditated bestowing his geological museum upon Tytherly. Geology did not make much progress in his time, as the clergy imagined there was something wrong with Nature. Indeed, many suspected Sir Charles Lyell of thinking himself wiser than Moses. To Mr. Saull belonged the merit of enthusiasm for the suspected science, and according to his knowledge he promoted it.

It being stated that £3,500 was required on loan for five

years, bearing interest at 5 per cent., intimations were at once received that the following sums would be sent from the following places: Oldham, £38; Birmingham, £80; Sheffield, £60; Worcester, £61; Coventry, £121; Leicester, £60; Nottingham, £60; Northampton, £17; a London Friend, £100; Glasgow, £20; Brighton, £5; Chatham, £50; Suffolk, £100; Edinburgh, £230; Hyde, £184; Norwich, £50; Ashton, £56; Macclesfield, £24; Liverpool, £61; Boston, £20; Hull, £7; Louth, £20. This celerity of subscription is good evidence of the widespread enthusiasm with which the Queenwood project was regarded.

In 1842 Mr. Owen resigned the governorship of Queenwood, and Mr. Finch became president of the society, when a new executive was formed for carrying out the affairs of Queenwood. At the Congress of 1843 Mr. Owen was re-appointed president. Subsequently Mr. William Pare became governor; and his suavity, accessibility, and zeal rendered him the most popular that held the office.

Among the new and honourable expedients for diverting the mind of the public from the polemical character of the communistic movement, was that of creating a Home Colonisation Society, which proposed to take the affairs of Queenwood into its hands. It was thought that men of money might be induced to join the society divested of controversial names which proved a hindrance to the general investment of capital. The projectors of the new Home Colonisation Society contributed largely to its funds, and for some time the *New Moral World* contained frequent announcements of the receipt of a thousand pounds at a time from this society. But its name had no enthusiasm in it, and its example produced very little outside effect. The constitution of this society was devised by Mr. W. H. Ashurst, an eminent solicitor in the City of London. Struck with compassion for poor people in every part of the empire who, by reason of the high rate of postage subsisting, were prevented from receiving or giving information affecting their interests or affections when separated from members of their families, Mr. Ashurst rendered invaluable and prolonged assistance to Sir Rowland Hill in the great advocacy which gave the people the Penny Postage. No writer made a more striking impression than he by a union of

sympathy and facts. Many insurgent reformers sought his protecting counsel ; he warned them against the pitfalls of the law, and when in the course of what they thought their duty they fell into them, he stretched forth a strong and generous hand to pull them out ; and his son and Mr. John Morris, who succeeded him, continued like disinterested service.

In 1843 came the resignation of Mr. W. Galpin, of his office of general secretary. A certain grandeur of aim, which he had in common with Mr. Owen, had led him to sanction a scale of administration which promised soon to exhaust the available funds of the party to which he had himself contributed with notable liberality. His influence in rendering the society neutral in matters of theology, destroyed the zeal of many, whose activity was necessary to sustain the movement among the branches, and his connection with the society was of too short a period for the education of new supporters, who should be content to advance economical projects by considerations purely economical. Enforced neutrality, dictated by policy, is different from the intelligent neutrality of discernment. Mr. Galpin took leave of the society, in a letter of good taste and dignity. It was "enough for him," he said, "that there existed a feeling that the cause might be better served by his ceasing to be one of its officers."

Mr. Owen had had the Tytherly Hall made to bear conspicuously outside of it the mystic letters C. M., which meant Commencement of the Millennium which, however, declined to begin its career there.

Towards the end of 1845 the *Standard* announced that "Mr. Owen had taken his leave of Rose Hall, Hampshire, for America. The Queenwood enterprise, after £37,000 was spent upon it, proved a failure."

"Rose Hall" was the name of a house on Rose Hill, a pretty little residence on the estate generally used for boarders, or as the occasional residence of the governor. Many ladies and gentlemen went down to Queenwood, and became residents, and contributed pleasantly both to the funds and the society of the establishment.

When affairs at Harmony (for Mr. Owen had given Queenwood this unfortunate name, which served to exaggerate every



minor difference into discord) began to present financial complications, the boarders gradually fell off. Members' meetings ceased to be interesting, and credit was the agreeable but insidious canker-worm which ate up Queenwood. Works were undertaken, provisions ordered, accounts with tradesmen augmented. Had the community begun on the principle of co-operative stores—of neither giving nor taking credit—its operations would have been humbler, but might have been lasting. It came to pass in the process of Queenwood affairs, that the branches in which poorer members predominated were able to send delegates, who were able to elect a new governor, who was unable from his own means to influence capitalists who were wanted. Mr. John Buxton, the new governor, was a man of honesty and courage, and, in more solvent days, would have been successful.

The three trustees of this society (Messrs. Finch, Green, and Clegg), being mainly or altogether liable, naturally became solicitous to protect themselves. Had they proposed to take the affairs of Queenwood into their own hands, undertaken to conduct it first for their own security, subjecting their administration to annual audit, and paying any profits they could realise in proportion to all claimants, Queenwood would have ceased to be a public community, but it would have ceased without discredit. Ultimately they hired labourers and such stray ruffians as were to be had, and put Mr. Buxton and his family forcibly into the lanes, where they all remained, for days and nights, in courageous protest on behalf of the humble community shareholders, who had subscribed their money in as much good faith as the largest lender, and were entitled to have some honourable treaty made with their chief representative. Thus ended the affair of the Queenwood community in 1846.

The trustees were assisted in their summary proceedings by Mr. Lloyd Jones. Their only justification for their violence was that they rescued the property with a view to do what justice was possible to every class of subscribers. Instead, these trustees used it for private purposes. They brought up the claims of the tradesmen; they met the demands of the Goldsmids from whom the estate was leased; they relinquished portions of the estate, and let the Queenwood Hall and

grounds for a school to Mr. Edmonson, a celebrated educator of Lancashire. It was afterwards known as Queenwood College; it combined industrial with commercial and scientific training. As a college it more resembled the famous school of Fellenberg, of Hofwyld; or that of Mr. Heldenmayor, of Workop, in Nottinghamshire, unrivalled among English schools for the industrial, social, and classical education imparted—of which Charles Reece Pemberton gave a memorable account in the *Monthly Repository* when edited by W. J. Fox. The Socialists were proud that Queenwood had become a college so much in accordance with their own conception of education. The best known teacher connected with it was Dr. Yeats, of Peckham; himself a writer of authority on education. Professor Tyndall and others of note in science and learning were teachers in it.

Many years elapsed, and it was found that the trustees, Messrs. Finch, Green, and Clegg, who had seized the estate, rendered no account of what proceeds they derived from it, not even to the principal loanholders, and it came to pass that Mr. Pare and others entered an action in Chancery to compel them to render an account. The trustees held that no society existed. But so long as a single branch of the community society continued to pay subscriptions, the society had a legal continuation. The Congress mentioned, of which Mr. Buxton, the governor, was the legitimate officer, continued the society. The present writer was appointed and continued to be the general secretary, and for one had always continued a subscribing member; and he, on behalf of the humble community subscribers, became a party to the action in Chancery. The case was tried before Lord Romilly. Corrupted, it would seem by immunity, the trustees resisted the honest demand to produce their accounts, and, incredible to relate, they set up the plea of the old enemies of social reform, that the society was constituted for the propagation of immoral principles, and was therefore illegal, and could not enforce accountability of its trustees. This plea from men who had been vehement and passionate defenders of this society, when other persons had brought this vile charge against it, was a new scandal. One of the trustees was certainly not of this opinion, for in 1841 Mr. C. F. Green wrote a letter from Spithead, announcing to his dear brothers

and sisters of the *New Moral World* that he had given up competition, and exclaimed—

“Farewell, dear brothers, I have marked you well,  
Nor yet for ever do I leave you now;  
And busy thoughts of thee my bosom swell,  
And thronging recollections crowd my brow.”

Mr. Green had no intention then of filing a statement in the Court of Chancery that he and his dear brothers and sisters were members of an immoral association. When affidavits of the false trustees (too long to quote here) were read by their counsel to Lord Romilly, he said: “Ah! it is all very well, my learned brother, but where is the money?” and when the learned counsel again implored the court to listen to hackneyed extracts from Mr. Owen’s ill-reported lectures on marriage, Lord Romilly said: “The court is quite aware of that, my learned brother, what we want is a statement of receipts and expenditure since the trustees took possession of this property.” The reluctant accounts had to be produced, and the balance withheld had to be paid into court. Lord Romilly was a just judge, regardless of the speculative opinions of those who sought justice at his hands. He had known Mr. Owen from his youth, and was quite aware that his opinions were not open to the imputations sought to be put upon them by the apostate trustees. The Queenwood Hall was sold by order of the court, and the proceeds equitably distributed among the loanholders and preference shareholders. There was none to be divided among original contributors to the community funds. Hundreds of men and women, who invested all their savings in this generous and hopeless enterprise, received nothing. And thus Queenwood passed away as a communistic scheme.

When the trustees seized upon the effects of the society, they made an attempt themselves to sell it, and they actually advertised Harmony Hall for sale in the *Times*, suggesting to purchasers that it might be made available for a lunatic asylum. In the opinion of the public, it had been used for this purpose already, and when such a use was officially pointed out for it in the future, it was quite clear that the trustees themselves were qualified to remain in it.

The Herald of Progress aforesaid, in which I was concerned,



was the continuation of that official record of the proceedings of the communist affairs which had been so long made in the *New Moral World*. The society of many names—Co-operative, All Classes of All Nations, National Religionists, but always communist at heart—had been declared extinct by lapse of members, at a congress at Rose Hill. This was not true, as in London and Sheffield members continued to pay, and therefore legally represented the interests of the society's subscribers in every town, who held what was called community scrip, and the *Herald* in question was maintained from a sense of duty to represent the interest of these superseded but deserving members. To this end a new Central Board was appointed, a president and general secretary. In the *Herald of Progress*, which was published from October, 1845, to May, 1846, the official addresses of the society appeared. In May, 1846, the *Reasoner* was commenced, which continued the official representation of the Queenwood society, and the history of its final proceedings were given in that journal alone. Thirty volumes of the *Reasoner* were issued between 1846 and 1872, edited by the present writer, in which the advocacy of Co-operation, as contemplated by its founders, was continued. The thirtieth volume was under the commercial charge of the leaders of Co-operation in Lancashire and Yorkshire, who had arisen since the Queenwood days, and who inherited the traditions of those honourable and unsuccessful struggles.

The cessation of Queenwood was primarily caused by insufficient capital to last while the new order of life consolidated itself, and the conditions of industrial profit were found. Astute farmers sometimes find that they must vary the nature of their produce to realise profit. It could be no argument against a communistic estate that its managers did not all at once make a profit by it. The chief charge brought against the management was that too much money was spent upon the Hall, which was but another form of saying that the capital was too small—since the Hall was not out of proportion to the estate rented, the educational convenience required, and the effect to be produced upon the alien and outside public. Miscellaneous as were the members collected together, they were all believers in the principle on which they associated; and there were none who did not deplore the day of parting

when it came. Working members said they would rather live on an Irish diet of potatoes than go again into the old world, of which they had had experience, if that would enable the society to hold on. Mr. Ironside, who had a few thousand pounds—all his available means—said he would throw it into a common fund, if others who had similar means would do the same, so that they might go on. Residents—and there were many who were boarders in the community—all regretted the end of their tenancy. To this day few who survive, who were there in any capacity, but regret the loss of the happy days which, till the end approached, were spent at Queenwood. Ladies, who are always difficulties in a new state of association, came to prefer Queenwood life. Some who were at first unhappy in the changed condition in which they found themselves there, and who made their husbands unhappy who brought them there, eventually liked their new life exceedingly. Others who were tartars in their social relations in the old world—just women at heart, but impatient of the crude wayward ways of domestics—there became the most agreeable and honoured of residents. It was not because they had to control their tempers, but because the occasions of natural irritation no longer existed under the happier circumstances of equality of duties and enjoyment.

The inmates of Queenwood ate as they listed. No restriction was put upon their preferences. There was a vegetarian table, at which some twenty dined, and, to the credit of their simple diet be it said, theirs was the merriest table in the hall. At meal-times it resounded with laughter, and often others came and surrounded it to listen to the pleasantries which abounded there. The present writer published an account of a personal visit to Harmony Hall.<sup>1</sup> My publication of it was an error. At that time it was the duty of all members to continue to support the executive who had hitherto governed, since the party who would change the administration had not the means to take affairs into their own hands. It was far better to suffer disappointment at the limitation of community objects than to witness the enterprise brought to a premature end. It was long before I discovered for myself, that truth was not relevant on all occasions because it was true. No man

<sup>1</sup> "Visit to Harmony Hall," reprinted from the *Movement*, 1844.

may speak a lie or act a lie ; but of all that he knows to be true he is only warranted in stating that which is relevant and useful. It may be a well-ascertained fact that the Home Secretary has changed his bootmaker, but it would be irrelevant in a debate upon the Budget. It was well known to be true that Mr. Disraeli was "on the side of the angels"; nothing came of it, and we were obliged to have Moody and Sankey to put things right ; therefore, however true, it was no use impressing upon public attention Mr. Disraeli's seraphic alliance.

Inequalities of education and commercial experience were great, and conflict soon arose between the prudent and the infatuated. The "earnest," as they were called, were (as they commonly are) anxious to go forward with other people's money. The prudent were considered "timid," because the prudent were generally those who would have to pay if the project failed. The infatuated had only principle to put into the concern, since if they lost their stock mayhap they could acquire another ; but those who lost their fortune might not be able so easily to repair that mischief. The enthusiastic would themselves incur all the risks they advise, were they in a position to do it. But this does not give them any right to vote a liability to others which they do not and cannot equally share. Yet this is constantly done in popular societies. The cheap-tongued orators of mere "principle" talk tall, and carry off all the applause, because their irresponsible followers are the majority ; while the prudent, who "want to see their way," are put down as "discouraging persons." There is yet a subtler creature than the infatuated, to be encountered in societies of progress—the spontaneous enthusiast : sharp, quick, fertile, unthinking, who sets schemes going because they ought to go ; others who regard those who have money as persons who should be made to pay, and calculate that if a good project is started, many who would not join in commencing it will subscribe rather than it should go down ; and that those who have made advances will make more, in the hope of not losing what has been already lost. These are not the architects, they are the conspirators—they are not the administrators, they are the speculators of progress. The brilliant and plausible operators in this line commonly end in diffusing an ineradicable



distrust in the minds of those who have been trepanned into their enterprises. In matters of social progress, as in commerce, risks have to be run, and loss must be calculated upon. Some may risk fortune, some health, some even life, as many do in the public service ; and it will be an evil day for society when people are wanting to do it. Whoever enter upon these generous enterprises with their eyes open we honour as philanthropists, or patriots, or martyrs ; but they who trepan others into these sacrifices without their knowledge and consent are responsible for their ruin. Though a philanthropic motive may mitigate indignation, it does not excuse the crime of destroying others in the name of benevolence.

No social community in Great Britain had a long enough time allowed to give it a reasonable chance of succeeding. Had any gentleman supplied as much money to be experimented with as Sir Josiah Mason, of Birmingham, supplied during fruitless, disappointing, and perilous years to the Messrs. Elkington for perfecting the discovery of electroplating, some of these social colonies would have pulled through. Establishing a new world is naturally a more elaborate and protracted work than establishing a new manufacture. Electroplating turbulent and competitive man with pacific and co-operative habits, is a more serious affair than electroplating metals.

The social movement, indeed, had at times the good fortune to be countenanced and aided by persons of high position and large means. When Mr. Owen held his great meeting in Dublin in 1821, the Archbishops and other prelates and many noblemen appeared on the platform to support him. At one meeting Lord Cloncurry wrote to say that he was, to his great regret, prevented being present. But this was no formal evasion, though expressed in the well-known terms of avoidance ; he wrote a letter intended to serve the object, and afterwards sent £500 to further it. Frequently when steps were about to be taken likely to compromise the scheme before the public, the prudent had the wisdom to come to the front and dictate the steps which would lead to a surer success than those about to be taken at the instigation of the eager and uncalculating.

Despite all the eccentricities by which these new opinions were accompanied, and by which all new opinions are accom-

panied, it is right to honour these ardent agents of improvement, who both made sacrifices and incurred discomfort and disadvantages for no selfish end of their own, for their enthusiasm arose from the belief that everybody would be advantaged by the chance they sought. Though Coleridge had warned them that it was vain to be sane in a world of madmen, yet they resolved to run this risk, and do the best they could to introduce sane arrangements of life.

Social progress, though an old historic dream, and an anxious pursuit of so many persons, can hardly be said as yet to have a policy. It cannot be presumed that the rich ought to aid unless they are satisfied of the soundness of the plan put before them. To assume that Brown ought to subscribe because Jones thinks he should, is a sort of philanthropic confiscation of Brown's property. All that can be reasonably done is to ask Brown's attention to the scheme, with a full statement of the chances against its success as well as those in favour of it, and if he declines to take part in the affair it may be matter of regret, but not of reproach. Scrupulous care should be taken never to induce or allow any generous enthusiasts to advance more than they are ready and able to lose in case of failure. If they do more, and yet do not show regret when the day of loss or ruin comes, their relatives will ; and an unknown party of fierce and defamatory adversaries of social progress will be developed in society, active perhaps for two or three generations. No less disadvantage occurs if humbler and poor adherents are encouraged or suffered to do their utmost "for the cause." The Jewish tribute of a tithe of their means is as much as can be safely taken from the household resources. If more be taken the family suffer, and, what is worse, the family complain, and diffuse among all their neighbours and friends a dislike and distrust of the philanthropy which puts upon them privations without their consent.<sup>1</sup> And when the day of reaction comes to the over-taxed contributor, he forms the most dangerous disparager of the very undertaking he himself

<sup>1</sup> My attention was engaged very early in popular movements by the fact that the most discouraging persons were those who had suffered losses in earlier enterprises. They had been heroes of forlorn hopes. There was reason to believe that had their sacrifices been limited to a tenth of their resources of time and money, they had never lost interest in struggles which did them honour to engage in.

has aided beyond his means. The extreme advocate commonly becomes the extreme adversary — defamatory, virulent, and vindictive ; and his discouraging word goes farther than that of the stranger who dislikes the thing offhand. Thus, as far as social progress is concerned, it is wise to have a policy, that it may be promoted by calculable methods.

When confident promises are made in the name of a new project, the public expect some signal fulfilment, and when nothing comes of the great pretension, their interest in it is no more to be awakened in any generation which remembers its failure. This should be a warning to those who believe they have important untried truth on hand, never to risk the experiment which is to decide its validity until they have at command the best conditions known to be necessary for realising it. Better to disappoint the eager by delay, than premature action should cause failure. A great project will live from age to age. Delay may damage, but it never kills ; whereas inadequate action is always regarded by the majority as the failure of principle rather than the failure of men.

All this care, patience, toleration, labour, generous sacrifice, and endurance seemed fruitless. But these pioneers had, however, the proud consolation expressed for them by the great Midland poetess :—

“The greatest gift the hero leaves his race  
Is to have been a hero. Say we fail :  
We feed the high traditions of the world,  
And leave our spirit in our country's breast.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Eliot.



## CHAPTER XI

## SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL ADVERSARIES

"Look closer to't; you make the evil first;  
A base, then pile a heap of censures on it.  
'Tis your own sin supplies the scaffolding  
And mason work: you skilful, rear the grim  
Unsightly fabric, and there point, and say,  
'How ugly is it.' You meanwhile forget  
'Tis your own handiwork."

CHARLES REECE PEMBERTON.

SOME account of the adversaries which the social pioneers had to encounter, will further elucidate the early history of co-operative enterprise.

The system of challenging everybody to discuss the new views produced some excitement. The clergy, who then never discussed long with anybody who answered them, naturally felt that these debates ought to be put down. Other persons did not like controversy, and though they would take no part themselves in suppressing it, were not unwilling to see it done. The teetotalers of Liverpool, who invented a new social crime, called Moderation, and rather apologised for the sot, actually suspended Mr. Finch, who had done more than all of them put together to advance temperance, and interdicted him from speaking on platforms in their name, because of his social notions. In Birmingham an honest Quaker shoemaker, named Empson, had to obtain a situation, but requiring testimony to his character as a sober man, he applied to Mr. John Cadbury, a well-known, influential, kind-hearted, and exemplary Quaker of the town, to give him a testimonial. Mr. Cadbury being secretary to the temperance society, who had known Empson many years as

a good teetotaler, was naturally sought to certify to the fact. Mr. Cadbury (whose handsome calves were the admiration of Birmingham, and who wore breeches the better to show them) answered as only a conventional Quaker can, "William Empson, I want to hold no communion with thee, and I have ordered others to hold no communion with thee. Thou recollects the conversation I had with thee about John Finch, of Liverpool, when I told thee he was a blasphemer." "Yes," said Mr. Empson, "I said if Mr. Finch comes to Birmingham I will do all I can to get him a temperance meeting; but, Mr. Cadbury, you have long known me as a prominent member of the temperance society, will you give me a character for sobriety?" Mr. Cadbury answered, "No, William Empson." "But," said Empson, "are you not a Christian, sir?" Mr. Cadbury answered, "Yes, William Empson, I am, and I always respected thee, but I do not want to hold any communion with thee."

The chief reason why persecution is so hateful is that it so frequently succeeds in putting down the truth. Well-directed persecution is a great power, like assassination. The Bishop of Exeter, whose claims for dignity in the Church were not godliness, but vigorousness and virulence, well understood that. Tory pamphleteering had done more for him than divinity, and he naturally came forward in the House of Lords to revile the grey-headed philanthropist, Mr. Owen, who had given his fortune to mitigate the lot of the poor. Lord Normanby had presented Mr. Owen at Court. Her Majesty, with that queenly impartiality with which she recognised every man of distinction who has served the nation, was glad to meet the ancient friend of her father. In Owen's intimacy loans had passed between him and the Duke of Kent, which the Queen repaid when she knew it. Good taste, if good feeling did not, should have kept the bishop silent concerning a presentation so honourably accorded, and which in no way concerned him. The bishop's speech in the House of Lords was thus reported in the *Morning Chronicle*, of January 27, 1840, by George Wallis ("Pencil 'em") :—

"He wished of his task he could be rid :  
For he felt a horror, indeed he did,  
Yet had seen and heard with profound disgust,  
Their deeds of shame, and their words of lust.

He was able to tell them all, he said,  
 The nauseous tale, from A to Z.  
 And he thought the Marquis of Normanby  
 Might relish the tale as well as he.  
 The Socialists were the vilest race  
 That ever on earth or hell had place.  
 He would not prejudice them—no, not he;  
 For his soul overflowed with charity.  
 Incarnate fiends, he would not condemn;  
 No, God forbid he should slander them;  
 Foul swine, their lordships must confess,  
 He judged them with Christian gentleness.  
 He hated all show of persecution,  
 But why weren't they sent to execution?  
 To hasty censures he objected,—  
 But was not Lord Normanby suspected?  
 He never believed a rash report,  
 But who took Robert Owen to Court?  
 He would not offend, but would fain be knowing,  
 If Normanby was not as loose as Owen?  
 And would ask, nought meaning by the hint,  
 Did he believe in God? for Owen didn't."

This was the spirit in which the Church commended itself to the people in those pleasant days.

The bishop made no idle speech. He meant mischief, and he did it. This was the time when Mr. William Pare, the registrar of Birmingham, lost his situation, and the town lost a publicist of a quality of knowledge which has never been replaced. All over the country working men of skill and character were dismissed from their employment for attending lectures upon the new principles of association. Some of the men became masters, and blessed the day when they were dismissed; and, as they became capable and relentless rivals of their former employers, the said employers did not bless the Bishop of Exeter for his services. Many workmen were ruined, others had to emigrate; and I have heard them say that if they can get at the Bishop of Exeter in the other world, either above or below, they will make things very uncomfortable to him. As the sharp-tongued bishop, clever in all things, prolonged his life to a great age, some of them thought he desired to delay the day of meeting them as long as possible.

When bishops are angry the people are grateful, Mr. Pare experienced this. On his leaving Birmingham, a dinner was given to him, November, 1842. Mr. Pare was then councillor of the ward of St. Thomas. Mr. G. F. Muntz, M.P., was present, and said, "if he was asked who he should appoint



to take charge of business requiring great care, great investigation, and great honesty, he should say Mr. Pare was the man to do it. It was not the second, nor the third, nor the tenth time he had made that statement. If every man had worked in the cause of reform as Mr. Pare had done, no man could calculate what would have been the effect."

Men of mark who showed any civility to co-operators were scolded in a grand way. One of the quarterlies was disagreeable to the poet laureate. It said: "Mr. Southey brings to the task two faculties which were never, we believe, vouchsafed in measure so copious to any human being—the faculty of believing without a reason, and the faculty of hating without a provocation. He seems to have an instinctive antipathy for calm, moderate men—for men who shun extremes and render reasons. He has treated Mr. Owen, of Lanark, for example, with infinitely more respect than he has shown to Mr. Hallam and Dr. Lingard; and this for no reason that we can discover, except that Mr. Owen is more unreasonably and hopelessly in the wrong than any speculator of our time."<sup>1</sup> Happily poet laureates have succeeded Southey equally incapable of being intimidated out of sympathy with the fortunes of honest, self-helping industry, as Tennyson did.

A number of wandering and flockless preachers hawked challenges from town to town. One was a Mr. John Bowes, a pachydermatous believer, who was not without the gift of imputation, and with whom many discussions were held. In a discussion of some nights which I held with him in Bradford, he gave me the idea that he was a species of moral rhinoceros. Apart from the religious vices of imputation which passed in those days for holy zeal, he was known as a friend of temperance and political freedom, and died in 1874 in Dundee well stricken in years, after forty years of Wesleyan-like activity as a peregrinating preacher.

The best qualified adversary who occupied co-operative attention for a long period was the Rev. Joseph Barker, a restless Wesleyan local preacher, who had not been used well by his own party, and he avenged himself by never

<sup>1</sup> The student of social progress in this country scarcely needs to be reminded that it was Southey who held out a helping hand to the promoters of co-operation (Leigh Hunt).

treating any other party well. He published pamphlets against social principles, always readable for their invective, but not instructive, as the objections he brought were entirely theological. The social advocates, who always had an appetite for an adversary, found Mr. Barker much occupation. He excelled most men who as Christians destroyed respect for Christianity. The overwhelming majority of social reformers were believers in the precepts of Christ, and desirous of being associated with what would now be admitted as practical Christianity. Mr. Barker had great command of Saxon-English and poetic imagination; so that whatever side he adopted, and he adopted every side in turns, he presented it with a force of speech which commanded attention. He was not a man who originated thought, but in discerning all that could be made of thought which he found originated, he excelled as a popular expounder of it. The imputations he made upon those who differed from whatever views he happened to hold at the time would have amounted to a crime, had it been an intellectual act of his mind; but, as his rotary imputations were applied by turns to every party to which he had ceased to belong, it was merely the expression of an irresponsible extremist. He left to the adherents of every opinion that he espoused, a legacy of exposition and denunciation which no other man contributed in his time.<sup>1</sup>

Of all the opponents who were encountered, the most impudent was a person known subsequently as Dr. Brindley. Mr. Hawkes Smith, of Birmingham, having delivered some lectures on phrenology, after a visit of Mr. George Combe to that town, Mr. Brindley attacked it. The present writer advised Mr. Hawkes Smith to answer him. Mr. Smith knew all about the subject, and Mr. Brindley nothing. Not being able to reply, Mr. Brindley attacked Mr. Hawkes Smith for his advocacy of Mr. Owen's views. This excited the applause of the clergy, who were willing that the new social principles should be denounced by some one, and Dr. Brindley was

<sup>1</sup> After years of defamation he wrote me a public letter, expressing his regret and conviction that the views he had so strenuously opposed were true. Afterwards he had correspondence with Mr. Owen to the same effect, and sought an interview with him, which was readily granted. See letters in *Co-operative News*, July 9, 1904.

engaged to do it. He became the Caliban of the Church. He did not issue from a Cave of Adullam, where all who were discontented were invited ; but from a Cave of Vituperation, where all who uttered rude words of Mr. Owen, or had offensive imputations to make against his followers, were welcome. He went on his mission of defamation to our manufacturing towns, and counselled employers to dismiss men of far honester repute than his own ; and scores of families were brought into distress by his calumnious tongue. His prayer was literally—

" Lord, in thy day of vengeance try them ;  
Lord, visit them who did employ them."

Brindley was originally a travelling comb-seller. It was to his credit that he became a schoolmaster—but he continued a pedlar in piety. As a disputant he was not without some good qualities. He was not afraid of discussion. He never sheltered himself under German mysticism or occult or transcendental interpretations, but stated and defended the broad, vulgar, orthodox Christianity of the day, from which abler, wiser men shrunk. He perished at last in the streets of New York. Ministers of religion in America were more scrupulous than in England, and did not adopt him. Dr. Hollick, a social missionary who had debated with Brindley in England, was living in New York, but did not hear of his fate until it was too late, else, he wrote, he would have rendered succour to his old adversary in his last extremity. Brindley had professed to follow Mr. Bradlaugh to America. It is impossible not to feel sympathy for the fate of the old combatant. He died like the war horse, sniffing battle from afar, when age had weakened his powers without being able to tame his spirit.

Moved by a generous eagerness to turn men's attention to the power which dwelt in circumstances, Mr. Owen devised the instructive phrase, that "man's character was formed for him and not by him."<sup>1</sup> He used the unforgettable inference that "man is the creature of circumstances." The school of material improvers believed they could put in permanent force

<sup>1</sup> This troublesome proposition, Mr. Bray relates, "was one upon which his followers, without exception, took their stand." By a resolution of the proprietors of Orbiston, the tenants had to sign their assent to it before admission into the society.



right circumstances. The great dogma was their charter of encouragement. To those who hated without thought it seemed a restrictive doctrine to be asked to admit that there were extenuating circumstances in the career of every rascal. To the clergy with whom censure was a profession, and who held that all sin was wilful, man being represented as the "creature of circumstances," appeared a denial of moral responsibility. When they were asked to direct hatred against error, and pity the erring—who had inherited so base a fortune of incapacity and condition—they were wroth exceedingly, and said it would be making a compromise with sin. The idea of the philosopher of circumstances was that the very murderer in his last cell had been born with a staple in his soul, to which the villainous conditions of his life had attached an unseen chain, which had drawn him to the gallows,<sup>1</sup> and that the rope which was to hang him was but the visible part. Legislators since that day have come to admit that punishment is justifiable only as far as it has preventive influence. To use the great words of Hobbes, "Punishment regardeth not the past, only the future."

Dr. Travis, an early and influential disciple of Mr. Owen, proposed a new statement of the doctrine of character; which, while it recognises the causation of the will, admits a self-determining power in man, which justifies instruction being given to him, and appeals being made to him. One who is in the foremost rank of those who have thrown light over ravelled questions of controversy, remarks, "Instead of saying that man is the creature of circumstance, it would be nearer the mark to say that man is the architect of circumstance."<sup>2</sup>

It would, therefore, be unjust to imply that adversaries, clerical or lay, always gratuitously misunderstood questions. There were statements made, which often left them open to honest misconception. The great masters of statements sometimes fail to convey an exact impression of their meaning. I have seen Mr. Cobden look at his words as though they were palpable to him in the air, retracting doubtful terms, amplifying the deficient, and qualifying those that went too far. Those

<sup>1</sup> See this idea, which is better expressed by my old friend Thom, the poet, of Inverary, in the preface to his poems.

<sup>2</sup> G. H. Lewes' "Life of Goethe."

who had none of Mr. Cobden's experience and sagacity, must have misled many fair-meaning opponents.

Mr. Owen gave emphasis to the doctrine of the mighty influence of material things over man for good or evil, because that was not acknowledged then. As far as belief was concerned, that, he said, was so entirely commanded by evidence, that a man could not be held responsible for conclusions which evidence justified.

There is one town (Leicester) where social views early took root—where a few men of strong understanding, of unusual dispassionateness, have, during more than two generations, maintained public interest in social ideas. What may be called the Leicester principle of controversy is to question and try all assertions. No person in the society meetings there advances any propositions except under the condition of submitting them to discussion. Dr. Brindley, when I last met him on a platform, proposed to debate the question of Atheism. This I refused to do, as it would lead the public to confound atheistic with secular principles. That the pretensions of dogmatic Theism should not be advanced unquestioned, Mr. Josiah Gimson, a resident engineer in the town, met Dr. Brindley several nights in succession, contributing greatly to the public information upon the subject. Elsewhere no instance has occurred in which a private gentleman had stepped forward in this way to discuss such a topic—the town fully understood and respected the courage and independence of the proceeding on his part. This was in 1873. Professor Tyndall, after one of his addresses at the Dundee meeting of the British Association, which had somewhat amazed the Duke of Buccleugh, the president for the year, said generously to the present writer, in reference to the toleration of modern controversies, "We do but reap where you [which included colleagues with whom I had acted] have sown."

Jeremy Taylor, nearly two hundred years before Owen, wrote: "No man can change his opinion when he will, or be satisfied in his reason that his opinion is false, because discountenanced. If a man could change his opinion when he lists, he might cure many inconveniences of his life; all his fears and his sorrows would soon disband, if he would but alter his opinion, whereby he is persuaded that such an

accident that afflicts him is an evil, and such an object formidable; let him but believe himself impregnable, or that he receives a benefit when he is plundered, disgraced, imprisoned, condemned, and afflicted, neither his sleep need be disturbed, nor his quietness discomposed. But if a man cannot change his opinion when he lists, nor ever does heartily or resolutely but when he cannot do otherwise, then to use force may make him a hypocrite, but never to be a right believer; and so, instead of erecting a trophy to God and true religion, we build a monument for the devil."<sup>1</sup>

The conclusiveness of these authorities availed us nothing. It was regarded as a new sin in the social party to show that eminent men had agreed in principle with them. Vindictiveness of the enemy harmed the movement by making many resentful and retaliative, prone to follow the advice of St. Just, who destroyed many excellent reformers by his maxim that they who attempt half measures dig their own graves. But St. Just's maxim did not keep him alive long enough to observe that they who insist upon whole measures while they are only half supported, commonly get themselves and their cause into the sexton's hands very early.

Only theorists talk of truth being immortal—I have seen it put to death many times. Lord Brougham in his day succeeded in terrifying Parliament into toleration of unpopular opinions, by contending that nothing could extend them but persecution. If brave men stand by unfriended truth, persecution will spread it. If the timid, or ease-loving, or the time-serving, have truth in hand, persecution well directed, will soon put it down. This is the real reason why persecution is intrinsically hateful.

Other agitations brought into play the passions: of the social agitation it must be owned that it appealed to the understanding only, and made men inquiring and reflective. The intellect let loose proved no wild animal needing a chain to restrain it, as Cardinal Newman<sup>2</sup> asserts, but a salutary and self-managing agent, active in improving individual character.

Adversaries of the Socialists were not dainty in their imputa-

<sup>1</sup> "Liberty of Prophesying."

<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Newman forgets altogether the wild animals reared in his chosen Church, of which Torquemada was the chief.



tions. The Rev. Mr. Anderson, of Glasgow was a man of character and talent, and of generous political sympathies, and from whom in later years I oft had the pleasure, through my friend Mr. William Logan, a wise city missionary, to receive valued communications ; yet in his vehement days Dr. Anderson called the "Very Reverend and Preliminary Social Father" an "Incestuous Profligate." But this was not very objectionable, in a rhetorical sense ; for when an angry adversary departs from the truth the farther he departs the better, and he is placed by the concurrence of common judgment outside the pale of those who are to be regarded. Some opponents did not know the truth when they saw it, and did not speak it even by mistake. Some of them did garble with an ability that would have entitled them to a prize medal, had there been any board of examiners to award distinction to that kind of merit ; but in controversy he who recognises these peculiarities arrests altogether the progress of his arguments, and invites attention to the adversary instead of the subject.

In February, 1834, the "Rev. Dr. Redford" published a letter in the *Worcester Journal*, against Mr. Owen. The *Crisis*, following the policy of helping the enemy to abuse its friends, published this letter, which I shall not reproduce.

In Worcester, the religious opposition to co-operative speeches amounted to violence. It was only by the effort of a strong-handed carpenter, whom I well knew, and in whose house I subsequently lived, one Robert Jones, that Mr. Owen's life was saved from an infuriated mob.<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Dr. Redford was an adversary who went great lengths. In a public discussion, he committed upon Mr. Owen an indignity which created a stronger hostility to Christianity than anything else which had occurred in the Midland counties. He made a motion of flinging the contents of his nose into Mr. Owen's face.

Mr. Alexander Campbell, the most fatherly-minded of all the missionaries, whose voice sounded like a truce, was forcibly prevented preaching the new gospel of industry on Glasgow Green on Sundays. It was a common thing to have halls

<sup>1</sup> I have heard that Jones, as years advanced, joined the Methodists. If so, he has a double chance of salvation if his creed be good, for he has generous works to plead, as well as faith.

refused after they had been duly let, and no County Court Judge in those days would award any damages for a breach of faith. Riots took place at the Broadmead Rooms, Bristol, upon the "social innovators." No doubt the innovators often retaliated, but the imitation generally fell far short of the original.<sup>1</sup>

In Bristol there was a dangerous fight through the narrow passage leading to the Broadmead Rooms, occupied by the Socialists in that city. Workmen were sometimes dismissed who were observed to have a copy of the *New Moral World* in their possession. In some cases clergymen refused to bury co-operators, and in one case a sexton refused to dig a grave for a Socialist's child. Mr. Connard, a well-known speaker, who became an insolvent, was stigmatised as deranged because he honourably refused to make oath, as not in accordance with his conscience, and Mr. Commissioner Reynolds sent him back to prison with many words of outrage when he could otherwise have discharged him. Mr. Connard was kept in prison many months, as a punishment for his creditable scruples. The Rev. Mr. Giles, a Baptist minister of disagreeable ability, said "Socialism was a union of all practices, save those of chastity and virtue." Had the showers of denunciation been material, like hail or rain, the pioneers would have lost their hats, and their garments would have been sodden.

When Mr. Owen was a boy, he swallowed some scalding food in his anxiety to reach his school early. His digestion was very much weakened by it, he was obliged to be very careful in the food which he took. In illustrating his belief of the influence of circumstances, he related this event as one which early disposed him to observation and care. With his oft indifference to what advantage might be taken of a casual expression, he mentioned that the food which he partook,

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, piety was not always self-respecting in its company, nor very dainty in its invitations. There were those who remember the Rev. W. Cooper, for instance, reading in hymn-books sturdy verses beginning—

"Come dirty, come stinking, come just as you are—"

an invocation of fine Saxon vigour, but not remarkable for delicacy. Nor did noblemen and clergymen then shrink from countenancing such style of address, any more than they have done in the case of Moody and Sankey and the Salvation Army, and if not deeming it good enough for themselves, at least thinking it might do the people good.

common in Wales in his youth, was called flummery. As this word was a slang term for untrustworthy speech, clerical speakers thought it an excellent point to say that the social system began in flummery.<sup>1</sup> This was deemed very witty, and always produced peals of laughter.

In Runcorn, a Mrs. Johnson left the Established Church and went over to the Wesleyan chapel. She was called upon to explain her proceeding. She replied that it was on account of her Sunday pie being exactly done when the Methodist chapel came out; whereas when she attended the church it was always overdone. The good woman regulated her piety by her pastry, a circumstance which influenced her faith. When the familiar vehicle we now see in the streets without terror first appeared in a university county, a peasant, in the vicinity of an Oxfordshire village, ran one night to warn the inhabitants that a frightened monster with saucer eyes, and making a strange noise, was coming towards the place. Those who had courage got behind the hedge to look. The monster turned out to be a post-chaise,<sup>2</sup> with two lamps. The clergy always mistook social science for an Oxford post-chaise, and ran out to alarm the people.

A fair, a clever, and gentlemanly opponent met with great respect and regard when one appeared, which was very seldom. The Rev. J. H. Roebuck held a public discussion with Mr. Owen, in Manchester, in 1837. He was a Wesleyan of remarkable ability and remarkable fairness, and the distinctness of his objections were well seen in consequence. Though he was, therefore, a more influential adversary than vituperative ones, he was always spoken of with respect, and his early death was sincerely deplored.

The old pioneers of Co-operation stood up for liberty and and relevance of speech. Some thought toleration meant indifference to what opinion prevailed. This was the mistake which some still make. Toleration means anxiety for the

<sup>1</sup> Charles Knight, in his "Passages of a Working Life," gives an account of his tour in 1828, to gain support for the Useful Knowledge Society. He tells us that at Liverpool he found a few clerical opponents, and one of them preached also against mechanics' institutes; at Manchester no clerical support could be obtained; and at York he could do little. "He found the commercial atmosphere better adapted for the diffusion of secular knowledge than was the ecclesiastical."

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Brosbridge, 1824.



truth : it means ardour for the truth : it means confidence in the truth. It believes that truth, like fire, is excited by collision, and that no truth can be known to be true, save that which has passed through the ordeal of controversy. Toleration means giving new truth fair play. Intolerance, which is prohibition, gives it none. The conditions of truth are now well ascertained to be liberty of expression, and of criticism ; it is not he who is tolerant of these, but he who is intolerant of them, who is indifferent to the truth, and upon whom the stigma of looseness and latitudinarianism of mind ought to fall.

## CHAPTER XII

## EARLY ADVOCATES

"So when the Parthian turned his steed,  
And from the hostile camp withdrew,  
With cruel skill the backward reed  
He sent; and as he fled he slew."

LOUIS BLANC has described the Jacobin as powerful, original, sombre; half agitator and half statesman; half Puritan and half monk; half inquisitor and half tribune. The co-operative advocates were not wanting in some of these qualities; and in perseverance and propagandist capacity they surpassed all working-class advocates of their time. They certainly were not demagogues, as any one may see from the definition of a modern writer who comprises in one short passage a complete study of those troublesome persons.<sup>1</sup> Our early advocates chose the unpopular side, which was ill-requited; they believed in their measures themselves, their lives and industry alike commanded respect, and their disinterestedness was shown in persisting in a course which was far from bringing them flattering recognition. The Duke of Wellington, when they were brought under his notice, admitted they were clever, but added, in his coarse, vindictive way, "they were clever devils." With more discrimination

<sup>1</sup> "The demagogue, in all ages and in all countries, is a man voluble and vehement in speech—expansive and popular in his humour—more plausible in advocating measures than wise in choosing them—unscrupulous in his alliances with all who will serve his immediate objects—extreme in his views—magnificent in his promises—ready with specious theories and proposals of sweeping change—restless in agitation, but impatient of obscure labour—aiming at immediate and showy results—and, from a loose and random way of living, often not a safe man in pecuniary affairs, although he may have no inclination for deliberate dishonesty" (C. Morrison, "Labour and Capital," p. 126).

and courtesy, as befitted his station, the Bishop of London said of these social reformers, that, though they were generally men of "some education," their deficiency was that "they were wanting in humble docility, that *prostration of the understanding and will*, which are indispensable to Christian instruction." No doubt they were open to this charge; want of "humble docility" was conspicuous in them. It never occurred to them to "prostrate their understanding." The use of it seemed to them the only way of making out how things stood.

These adventurous and unskilled social navigators had to pull their frail skiffs through rough waters. At that time society abounded with persons—they are not yet quite extinct—who would never do anything for the workman except think for him. They would neither find him work nor bread, but they would supply him with opinions, either religious or political, ready-made. These people gave a very poor account of social projects. The political economist considered them the dream of folly—the clergyman, of wickedness—the statesman, of insubordination—the employer, of idleness—the rich man, of plunder—the capitalist, of confiscation—the journalist, of demagogism.

Co-operation in its early days was somewhat ramshackle. Mostly pale and thin, these amateur shopmen looked as though they needed themselves to eat up the commodities they tried to sell. What business they did was done in an unusual way. Every crotchet that thickened the air of Utopia was proclaimed at their doors. Poets, enthusiasts, dreamers; reformers of all things, and the baser sort of disbelievers in any, gave them a turn: for, as we all know, a nimble eccentricity always treads on the heels of change.<sup>1</sup> There was nobody so mad but their right to improve the world was respected; there was not a regenerating lunatic at large who did not practise upon them. The philosophers were scandalised at them, the political economists shook their heavy heads at them—the newspapers were scornful—politicians in Parliament proposed to put them down—bishops interdicted them in the House of Lords—and the clergy consigned them individually and collectively to per-

<sup>1</sup> "Licentiousness always treads on the heels of reformation" (R. W. Emerson).



dition. Luckily the honest fellows had a well-instructed patience. Their advocates served them well, teaching them that every creature must be allowed to articulate after its kind, and would do better if it only knew how. The heretics, who were their only friends, eventually silenced the clamour; and the men of sense and purpose made their way to the front, and Co-operation got a hearing, and grew in favour with men.

As in all new parties, and as for that in old ones too, at times there were figures in the social landscape that attracted attention, without enticing adherents. Fastidious friends of progress were not pleased that the prominent advocate of the system should be an Irish philosopher—Mr. Thompson, of Cork—who was against large families, and in favour of dissection. Social Reformers, not knowing how to subordinate without discouraging the just efforts of others, became the Nursing Mother of all the “Crazes” of the day.

There was a Dr. McCormac, of Dublin, who, being like Bentham, a philosopher above vulgar prejudice, prominently advocated that all co-operators should leave their bodies for anatomical purposes. He was called the “Skeleton-Man” of the movement; and some Christian partisans did not hesitate to say that Mr. Owen wanted to get men into communities in order to sell their bodies for dissection. Every friend of the new system was supposed already to have sold his soul to a certain eminent and enterprising contractor for that article. As to Mr. Owen, it must be owned charity was his sole religion, and this was a religion which God may recognise but which has not found favour in the world yet; and one which had no followers in Mr. Owen’s days except a few perilous persons, of whom the Rev. Robert Hall, with his fine talent for contemptuousness, said “lived in the frigid zone of Christianity.” Mr. Owen himself was called the “Circumstantial Philosopher”—a name not without honour, for circumstances were in very bad want of a philosopher.

One of the strange and inexplicable figures that flitted about the early co-operative movement was a gentleman who usually signed himself as P. Baume, “reforming optimist.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The profession of principles of the Reforming Optimist was that though everything is for the best at this instant, everything will be better upon the whole surface of our planet at every one of its diurnal revolutions—nay, at every pulsation of the human heart.

In after-years two or three other initials would appear between the P. and the B. Who, indeed, he was, or whence he came, nobody ever knew. Common repute said he acquired a fortune as a foreign spy. If so, it was doubtless in the interest of freedom, for he always appeared to care for it. He had spent the greater part of a long and wondrously active life in bequeathing property which nobody ever came to possess. For thirty years there was hardly any meeting held anywhere in reference to social reform at which he was not present in some part. He was ubiquitous. In distant towns, in Manchester or Liverpool, the eyes in search of mysterious faces would be sure to light, in some quarter of the room, upon a disguised figure, whose brilliant, penetrating eye alone revealed his identity.

Mr. Baume had what he called Experimental Gardens, in the New North Road, leading from Battle Bridge to Holloway, where he invited all practical men and women to meet him, with a view to agree upon something which would settle everything. The presumption is that they never did agree upon anything, since everything has not been settled yet. His proposal at that time was to establish a Co-operative College, for which purpose he said he would unhesitatingly and most cheerfully give up to them his most valuable leases and ground rents—several extensive plots for building and gardening ground, fourteen acres altogether, his funded property, his ready money, in a word, everything he possessed; “including his most unrelenting exertions through life.” Mr. Baume had made a proposition to advance money to any amount, and on the most liberal terms, to any carpenter or bricklayer willing to build cottages on his land, on speculation, or for the location of their families. He stated then that all his property was vested in the hands of trustworthy characters; his unremitting exertions being devoted to the establishment of a Co-operative College and Community.

At one of Mr. Owen’s Sunday lectures he sent a little boy with a note, saying the lad had been born three years before, and had been entrusted to his care, but he had never allowed him to be christened because he had never found

any character in history sufficiently perfect to warrant him in adopting his name ; but now Julian Hibbert was dead, he requested Mr. Owen to christen him by that name. Mr. Owen, and many of his disciples after him, were accustomed to christen children who were brought to them, and they commonly made little speeches to the parents, counselling them to remember how much sensible treatment and pure material conditions might influence the child for good.

This gentleman continued to give his property away. He gave it to nearly every community that was formed. He gave it to the United Kingdom Alliance. He has given it to the co-operators, and to other persons and parties, certainly too numerous to mention. A considerable portion of his property lay in the neighbourhood of Colney Hatch. He always professed to be afraid that some one would confine him in a lunatic asylum, and yet he established himself in the neighbourhood of one. There was not the slightest fear for him. There was no asylum which would have undertaken to manage him. He would have driven the governors and directors all mad in a month, by the inexhaustible fertility of his projects. He was quite sincere in saying he would give the whole of his possessions away, as well as his "unrelenting life exertions," for he appeared never to require anything whatever to live upon. A few peas, which he commonly carried in his pocket, seemed to be his chief source of subsistence. With ample means he would live in one obscure room, or rent a railway arch, and deposit himself there, and he did not, like the parties in Mr. Pickwick, select the dry ones, but took a damp one as being the cheapest. He would carry about with him bundles of bank-notes in a dress-coat pocket, and keep a small live monkey there ; so that if any adventurous hand found its way there, it would meet with a very unexpected remonstrance. His property, at the site of the Experimental Gardens, lay over what is now known as the Caledonian Road, and the Pentonville Prison part, and had he retained it a few years longer than he did, he might have derived an immense income from it. At that time his land was covered with furze and mysterious-looking cottages, in one of which he lived. It was known as the "Frenchman's Island," where very unpleasant visitors



were frequently attracted ; but as he was known to go about at night with a pistol in his pocket, and as he was very likely to fire it, and knew perfectly well how to do it, a good deal of curiosity was repressed by that peculiar reputation. He had projects for a community experiment there, and he brought more scandal upon the cause by his eccentric proposals than any other man.

One of the curious enthusiasts of 1837 was Samuel Bower, of Bradford. He was one of the abstemious co-operators who lived, like the Reforming Optimist, chiefly upon grey peas, of which he carried a supply about, and strenuously insisted that that peculiar diet should be universally adopted. Nevertheless, he was a strong-thinking man, and had many useful and self-denying views, which he illustrated in many curious and impracticable papers.

There were many among the advocates whose position and attainments commanded respect, else the movement could never have attained the ascendancy it did. One who remained longest known was "Dr. King, of Brighton."<sup>1</sup> This gentleman was educated for the Church, at Trinity College, Cambridge. He married a daughter of Dr. Hook, Vicar of Rottingdean. He subsequently adopted the medical profession, from intellectual preference, and settled in Brighton, where he originated and edited the first publication, called the *Co-operator*. He was a man of notable friendships, and promoted many liberal movements in conjunction with Dr. Birkbeck, Ricardo, Owen, and Lord Brougham. His daughter married Mr. John Robertson, well known as one of the early editors of the *Westminster Review*, during Mr. Mill's connection with it. Dr. King was justly considered one of the founders of Co-operation.

Dr. King continued his interest in Co-operation until the end of his life. On entering his eightieth year he wrote to the *Co-operator* a letter as enthusiastic as those he wrote half a century earlier, and which might have been

<sup>1</sup> Dr. William King was born at Ipswich in 1786. Gaining considerable distinction at Cambridge, he was elected a Fellow. He settled at Brighton. He assisted a co-operative society then established in West Street. On May 1, 1828, he issued the first number of the *Co-operator*, and continued it monthly until 1830. Dr. King died at Brighton in 1865.

written by a young convert. He had the honour of being consulted by Lady Noel Byron, who had contributed £300 towards the success of a productive association established among those Brighton societies.

Dr. King's *Co-operator* was a source of inspiration in many parts of the country, mere fragments of numbers being treasured up by the recipients. Stores have been founded in consequence of their perusal. The fairness, temper, and the certain moderation of tone rendered Dr. King's little paper, all the articles being written by himself, one of the wisely-influential precursors of Co-operation.

P. O. Skene, Esq., who is always mentioned as an "Esq.," appears frequently in early co-operative reports as a promoter, contributor, and medium by whom ladies and others made contributions. There was also a Mr. G. R. Skene, his brother; but being less personally distinguished he is described as *Mr. G. R. Skene*. Being very watchful and workful as a secretary, he deserves equal mention in these pages. In those days, when Co-operation was struggling, it was no doubt necessary to mark when one of its adherents held a position of more conventional respectability than others. "Philip O. Skene, Esq.," was really a very accomplished gentleman, an eminent teacher of languages in his day. He held a German class in the upper room of the first-named London Co-operative Store, 19, Greville Street, Hatton Garden. Mr. J. S. Mill and Mr. J. A. Roebuck, when young men, were among the remarkable pupils who attended.

The *Times* of 1837 gave a very honourable notice of Philip Orkney Skene. "His father, Major Skene, and grandfather, Governor Skene, were both attainted of high treason against the United States, as British Loyalists; and his great-grandfather was attainted of high treason in the rebellion of 1715. The *Times* stated that the Earl of Fife, who is a branch of the Skene family, had taken the estate which had previously descended from father to son for eight hundred years in the Skene family. Before Philip O. Skene was twenty years of age, he was sent to superintend the erection of the military fortification at Hoy Island, in the Orkneys. He joined the English army, entering Paris, in 1815, and from his great knowledge of the French and

German languages, was appointed to attend the Crown Prince of Prussia, whose sovereign, in distinction of his services, presented Mr. Skene with a valuable ring, set with numerous brilliants. After attaining much scientific distinction abroad, he returned to England, entered the Middle Temple, and ate several terms; when Mr. Owen's efforts at New Lanark, in its best days, so impressed his mind, that he devoted afterwards much of his time and means to promoting similar objects. Mr. Skene died at the age of 44, at Lewes, from exhaustion, after a protracted state of debility, brought on by over-exertion in his duties as surveyor of roads, a post which he had held for several years." The *Times* added, that "he left elementary works in German, Italian, French, Spanish, Latin, and Greek, besides works which bear other names than his."

At the (Third) Co-operative Congress, of 1832, a very remarkable letter was received from a distinguished man, Leigh Hunt, who dated it from 5, York Buildings, New Road, London. He alleged that "increasing avocations and ill-health alone prevented his attendance." Happily neither killed him until nearly thirty years later. He stated he believed he was the first journalist who endeavoured to impress upon the public the propriety of considering Mr. Owen's views. Touching the supposed contradiction between the claims of this life and a future one, he cited what was said by a wise man, "that it would be a very strange and ungrateful thing if we behaved ourselves gloomily or indifferently in a beautiful garden which some friend gave us, because by and by he had promised us a better."

Another name, always one of interest and respect, was that of Mr. Thomas Allsop, who, to the manners and cultivation of a gentleman, united an originality of sentiment and generous enthusiasm for political as well as social change, displayed with the same force and boldness by no other adherent of social views. A member of the Stock Exchange, he understood the conditions of business as well as those of the social state contemplated. He was the adviser of Feargus O'Connor in his best days, and conferred upon him the necessary property qualification which Mr. O'Connor did not possess when he was first elected a member of Parliament



viz., £300 a year derived from land. On one occasion Mr. Allsop, who was also connected with a large and fashionable business in Regent Street, alarmed the law courts and the press by refusing to be sworn upon a grand jury, on which he had often served, on the ground that he objected to find a prisoner guilty, alleging as a reason that in every part of London the criminal class was recruited by flagrant social neglect. This was done for the express purpose of forcing public attention to the subject. Such an act by one in Mr. Allsop's position produced a great impression.<sup>1</sup> In the late Mr. Justice Talfourd's memorial of Charles Lamb, the reader will find graceful acknowledgments of Mr. Allsop's long and helpful friendship to the great Essayist.

Another writer, who impressed society with the opinion that persons of taste and means were favourable to social views, was Mr. John Minter Morgan, author of "Hampden in the Nineteenth Century." This work appeared in two handsome volumes, and was printed in the costliest manner of books, with original copperplate illustrations of great skill, of good design, and finished execution, in mezzotint. Some of the scenes, dramatic and communistic, surpass in conception anything produced either before or since. The events of the story carry the reader into the highest society, and the dialogues conducted with the most eminent men of the day are gracefully rendered—their known and published sentiments being skilfully interwoven in the speeches made. If co-operative views had always been presented with as much judgment, they would have made wider way in the world. Mr. Morgan wrote other works, as the "Reproof of Brutus," and the "Revolt of the Bees," which attracted considerable attention in their day. The "Reproof of Brutus" was written in verse, but excited no jealousy among the poets of his time.

When a young man, Mr. Morgan displayed more courage than was to be expected from his gentle character. He appeared as a lecturer in the theatre at the Mechanics' Institution in defence of Mr. Owen's Sunday lectures. Mr. Morgan's lecture was delivered on Thursday, May 6, 1830. Mr. Owen had been permitted to deliver Sunday lectures in

He is the author of "Recollections of Samuel Taylor Coleridge," who was his periodic Sunday guest for a great number of years.

that theatre morning, afternoon, and evening, on the "Moral and Social Duties of Man." The clergy, however, had interfered. Bishop Blomfield had spoken at King's College, and said that "all other sciences and acquirements than those of the Church of England and Ireland ought to be held subservient to those principles of action furnished by the doctrines of the Gospel." The members of the Mechanics' Institution were compelled, in deference to clerical opinion, to recommend a discontinuance of the Sunday morning lectures, as they were delivered during the hour of divine service. Mr. Tooke, the eminent solicitor of the institution, gave it as his opinion that the lectures were illegal, besides being calculated to compromise the usefulness of the institution. Mr. Tooke is mentioned by Mr. Morgan, who said that he had consulted with Mr. Brougham on the subject, who entirely concurred in that view. Mr. Morgan said that if Mr. Brougham was right in his opinion as to the lectures being illegal, it was incumbent on him, who stood so committed to the cause of mental liberty, to move the repeal of the Act. The Act is still unrepealed. Lord Amberley boldly endeavoured to procure its repeal. By ignominious evasions, lectures have continued to be delivered in London since; but as often as Christianity opens its dangerous eyes, and chooses to make itself offensive, it sends the philosophers home mute, with their lectures in their pockets.<sup>1</sup> Those who think that social reformers have at times troubled themselves needlessly with theology should take into account that their way has been blocked up by it all their days. Mr. Morgan, later in life, took fruitless trouble to induce the clergy to interest themselves in social reform. Gentlemen who were his guests at Sackville Street still tell how they were always escorted after dinner to see his model of a community, in which a church formed one of the ornaments. Mr. Morgan made his fortune as a paper-maker, which is probably one reason why he excelled other social writers in producing elegantly-printed books, whose clear and thick leaves and broad margins felt in the hand like a lucid and substantial argument.

Mr. William Pare was the first recognised co-operative

<sup>1</sup> This was done to Professor Huxley.

lecturer, and the most persuasive and persistently practical of them all. The editor of *The Co-operative Miscellany*, of 1830, introduced him for the first time to its readers in curious deferential terms as being their "very respectable and indefatigable friend." His first lecture was delivered where he spoke three times, in the Music Hall, Bold Street, Liverpool. There were four co-operative societies established in Liverpool at that time.

Mr. Thompson, of Cork, had the merit of satisfying Mr. William Pare of the utility and practicability of the co-operative system. His conviction was converted into ardour by Mr. Thompson's "Enquiry into the Distribution of Wealth." Mr. Pare first appears in co-operative literature at the anniversary of the first Birmingham Co-operative Society, at which he presided, on the 28th of December, 1829, at the Vauxhall Tavern, Ashted. Nearly a hundred persons were present, including some thirty of the members' wives, for co-operative tea-parties were from the first sociable, and included wives and children as well as husbands. Mr. Pare began by proposing the health of "the king in his social capacity of father of his people," which denoted the benevolence rather than the accuracy of the social imagination of the period. Mr. Pare quite understood then, and expressed at that early date, the policy of Co-operation as being "a scheme of voluntary equality"; and contended that the English were not to be confounded with French agitators. "The French," he said, "worked by force, the English by persuasion. The French cried 'Down with the aristocrats!' the co-operators said 'Let them alone.'" Mr. James Guest, the well-known bookseller of Birmingham, was vice-president on the occasion, and gave "Success to the numerous co-operative societies then established in England, Scotland, and America." One of the toasts was "The immortal memory of John Bellers, the first known projector of a co-operative community in England."

The sixth number of the *United Trades' Co-operative Journal* records that on Tuesday evening, March 30, 1830, Mr. Pare, the corresponding secretary to the First Birmingham Co-operative Society, delivered his first public lecture at the Mechanics' Institution, Manchester, remarking—"Mr. Pare



is a young man of very extensive practical information, deeply impressed with the evils which afflict the working classes of this country, and most zealous in his endeavours to disseminate that information which he thinks must ultimately produce a beneficial effect."

At Manchester, later in the year, he held a meeting at the house of one of the members of the first society, which was well attended, several persons were present belonging to the Stockport society. On three successive evenings he spoke in the theatre of the Mechanics' Institution. At his first lecture there were not less than one thousand persons present. Mr. Owen seldom distinguished any of his adherents by notice, but in Mr. Pare's case he did. He said, describing a visit he (Mr. Owen) made to Birmingham: "I found him engaged in the business of railways, which he appears to understand in his department of it, if we are to judge from the approbation he has received from the committees of both Houses of Parliament."<sup>1</sup> This instance shows with what judgment Mr. Owen could praise when he chose. Nothing could be more delicate, indirect, and uncompromising. Had he said more, or said it differently, it might have been disastrous to Mr. Pare. For more than forty years Mr. Pare was the tireless expositor of social principles. He learned early from Robert Owen the golden principle which Leigh Hunt so finely expressed, that "the errors of mankind proceed more from defect of knowledge than from defect of goodness." All the acerbities which ever arise in any of our societies arise from members who do not know this, or who forget it if they do. Mr. Pare seldom forgot it. His angerless voice and his pleasant patience were an endowment as strong as his general zeal, which never hasted and never rested until envious death took him from us.

Besides Mr. Pare, Mr. Hawkes Smith, and Mr. Murphy, there was Mr. John Rabone, also of Birmingham, whose pen was often to be met with in early co-operative literature. His letters in the volumes of the *Crisis* were always earnestly and pleasantly written, mainly appealing to Christians to recognise the spirit of Christianity in co-operative effort. It was his writings which first caused the name "Christian

<sup>1</sup> *New Moral World*, October 1, 1836.

Socialist" to be used, and in 1837 persons began to sign themselves by that name.

Another man of mark and promise in the early social movement was Rowland Detrosier, who died prematurely very much regretted by all politicians of the people in every part of Great Britain. Though well cared for at times by opulent friends, he had no sustained support, and exposure upon a coach, after a night lecture, when he was in a weakly state, brought on inflammation of the lungs, which killed him.<sup>1</sup> He was a man of greater promise than any who arose among the political and co-operative classes, and had he lived he would have been a leader. He had all the qualities of knowledge, enthusiasm, geniality, respect for the convictions of others, and powers of commanding address. Detrosier was the natural son of Mr. Robert Norris, of Manchester, and was abandoned, when a boy, by his French mother, whose name he bore. He was put to the trade of a fustian cutter. At nineteen he unfortunately married. By self-study, continued when he and his family were nearly famishing, he taught himself French and Latin, and acquired a knowledge of the sciences, which enabled him to lecture upon them in a manner which few professional lecturers of the day could excel, in communicating animated knowledge. He preached in a Swedenborgian chapel in Hulme, where he used to astonish the congregation by filling his pulpit with geological specimens, and placing electric and galvanic machines on the desk where his Bible and hymn-book should lie. He had the distinction of founding the first two Mechanics' Institutions ever established in England. As he had no support but that which his daily labour brought him, he often suffered extreme distress. His reputation, however, reached London, where he was welcomed. Jeremy Bentham had been so struck by some of his discourses that he sent him a present of his books, and showed him marks of flattering regard until his death. Lady Noel Byron sent him £20, and often invited him to her house in London. Mr. Mordan is said to have bestowed some of the earlier proceeds of his gold pens upon him, and Mr. John Stuart

<sup>1</sup> He had been delivering the opening lecture at the Mechanics' Institution, at Stratford, near London.

Mill not only befriended him while he lived, but befriended his family for many years after his death. It was, however, Leigh Hunt to whom he was indebted for his introduction to London: his name was first mentioned in a generous and discerning article in the *Examiner*, Leigh Hunt being greatly struck, as everybody was at that time, by his lecture on the Necessity of the Extension of Moral and Political Instruction among the Working Class. Detrosier had a voice and eloquence resembling Lord Brougham's, and his mind was distinguished by rapidity and power.

Mr. James Watson, one of those few publishers of forbidden literature, who gave consideration how far the reputation of his party might be promoted by his judgment in the books he sold, and by his personal probity, came up from Leeds, when a young man, to take the place of one of Carlile's shopmen, 500 of whom were imprisoned for selling unstamped publications, a fate which very soon befel Mr. Watson. He is recorded as acting as a co-operative missionary in Leeds, Halifax, Barnsley, Todmorden, and other places in connection with the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge. He is spoken of as "the first missionary to the country, and as having done great and permanent good." In one of his speeches Mr. Watson put the case of the working class co-operators in a suggestive form, thus:—"The co-operators would have those who had hitherto lived upon the labour of others henceforth live upon their own capital. They would then discover how long it would last"—unless recruited by the exertions of the industrious.

The name of Mr. Henry Hetherington appears as far back as the report of the fourth quarterly meeting of the British Association for the Promotion of Co-operative Knowledge, 1830, when he was elected one of the committee of the first Soho society. He was another publisher distinguished by a long career of peril. Straightforward, intelligent, hearty, genial, he was best known by the *Poor Man's Guardian*, which he edited, printed, and published, when no one else out of prison could be found to undertake the peril of it.

Another man of subsequent note, who took part in the early Congresses, was Mr. James Bronterre O'Brien, then the editor of the *Midland Representative*. He subsequently



suffered imprisonment in the cause of Chartism. An animated and able speaker, of very varied information, and possessing a considerable knowledge both of French and English literature, he was regarded as the political school-master of the Chartists, but, like most Irishmen, his genius lay much in suspicion, in which he excelled; and he undid, by the distrust which he diffused, the good he was capable of accomplishing by his generous fervour. He it was who translated Buonarroti's "History of Babœuf," as we have said elsewhere. Bronterre had all the geniality of his countrymen. It was pleasant to be his friend.

Among other qualifications for the millennium displayed by energetic Socialists, was that of originality in figures of speech. One of the greatest masters in the rhetoric of the "New Moral World" was Mr. Joseph Smith, of Salford. When the Queenwood community was in force he went about the country collecting sheep with which to stock the farm. His plan was to rise at the end of a public meeting, and propose that all who had enthusiastically passed communist resolutions should prove their sincerity by joining there and then in subscribing a sum sufficient to buy a sheep. The most ardent who had held up their hands in favour of the motion of the evening, were not always prepared to put them in their pockets. To incline the surprised enthusiasts to that operation, Mr. Smith would apprise them that he had ordered the doors to be locked, so that no one could leave until the price of the sheep arrived on the platform. Then he would say they had bought a community, they must pay for the community, and they must stock the community, "else they would all fall into the abyss which was hanging over their heads." In view of this unforeseen calamity, reluctant shillings were produced until the market price of the coveted sheep was made up. When this was done, they were rewarded by being assured by Mr. Smith that "now they would all sail into port on the top of their watch-towers," a kind of vessel quite unknown to Her Majesty's constructor of the navy. This inventive rhetorician was described in the organ of the society as "the high priest of the 'New Moral World.'"

On other occasions he proved himself not deficient in old-

world illustration. He had been descanting with his accustomed fervour upon the deceptions of competitive commerce, when a curious auditor put the question—what did he mean by deception? The ardent and good-natured orator, who was commonly right when he felt, and wrong when he thought, had probably never given a public definition in his life, and was without any idea how to define deception. The meeting was large, hostile, and impatient, and the hesitation of the lecturer was loudly resented, when it suddenly occurred to Mr. Smith that his head was quite bald, and his black, curly, and unsuspected locks were not his own, so he boldly snatched off his wig and exclaimed: "That is deception." His raven hair, hanging in his hand like a scalp, and the sudden sight of his unimagined and naked pate was so ludicrous, that his adversaries were confounded and convinced, and with the generosity of an English audience, the enemy applauded him as heartily as his friends.

In those exalted days social editorial art went for nothing. No one troubled himself as to how the world would regard his language. Just as the early apostles never reflected how distracted fathers of the future Church would labour to reconcile their sayings (believing, as they did, that the end of all things was at hand, and there never would be any fathers to be perplexed), so these social seers expected that the "old immoral world" was played out, and that nobody in the new substitute they had in hand could ever heed anything said or done in it. Their least impulsive writer called the attention of two counties "to the active, the energetic, the devoted Fleming,"<sup>1</sup> and the editor asked "Where did Joseph Smith get his superior spirit of prophecy, and give us tablets of remembrance chiselled as it were in alabaster for purity, and gold for splendour and endurance."<sup>2</sup> I first visited him in 1879 at Wissahiccon, in America, where he kept a hotel whose great attraction was a large room, where ranging around it were small bushes of the district, on the branches of which he had carved, with his own hand, hundreds of political coteries, known to all the land—so life-like and natural, with likenesses so unmistakable, that they were the wonder and diversion of

<sup>1</sup> *New Moral World*, December 31, 1836, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, February 4, 1837.

thousands of visitors. Afterwards I sent him the first edition of these volumes, which he had never seen, and his sudden joy at the remembrance of him when he thought he had been forgotten—killed him. He had left England more than thirty years then.

Mr. Finch was the earliest and greatest pamphleteer of the party. Mr. Owen first introduced Mr. Finch to the co-operative public at his institution, in Charlotte Street, in 1834, as "a new labourer in the field." The "new labourer" actually got inserted in the *Liverpool Albion* a series of letters on the "Fooleries of Sectarianism." These "fooleries" were sincerities to those who entertained them, and they naturally resented this mode of describing them. But it is always your religious man who is most offensive to pious people. A man who dissents from the newspaper religions is respectful to them; and if he cares to oppose them, reasons against them without offensive imputation: but your religious man, who has a little infallibility of his own, can venture to commit outrages on others, knowing that his rudeness will pass for holy wrath.

In 1842, Mr. John Gray, of Faldonside, Galashiels, published "An Efficient Remedy for the Distress of Nations." Mr. Owen having set a fashion of devising "an entirely new system of society," Mr. Gray put forth one. Society profits in a silent, sulky way, by suggestions made to it: yet it dislikes any one who proposes to overhaul it. Mr. Gray had a great plan of a Standard Bank and Mint. The Duke of Wellington made known this year, in one of his wonderful notes, that "he declined to receive the visits of deputations from associations, or of individual gentlemen, in order to confer with them on public affairs; but if any gentleman thinks proper to give him, in writing, information or instruction, on any subject, he will peruse the same with attention." The modest, painstaking duke had not Mr. Gray before his eyes when he said this. That gentleman would have taken the duke at his word, and soon have brought him to a standstill. The pleasantest part of Mr. Gray's "Efficient Remedy" is where he tells the reader that he had published a previous work which had not sold, so that in issuing another he could only be actuated by a desire to advance the interests of mankind, and this was true. He



was a well-meaning, disinterested, and uninteresting writer. His books never sold, nor could they be given away; and there was for long a stock at two places in London where they could be had for the asking, and those who applied were looked upon with favour.

Those who have read much of the rise and career of new opinions will be aware that religious history would present a plentiful series of ridiculous situations and deplorable absurdities. And one reason why similar eccentricities are continually being reproduced in new movements is because party historians do not think it a duty to relate them. If they did, they would be warnings to ardent adherents to consider how they may best guard the truth they represent from misapprehension or dislike. It is true that many of the disciples of social science were flaccid, dreaming people, possessed of a feeble goodness; but there were also a larger number of strong, wise, cultivated, and determined adherents who sustained the movement when only men of courage would espouse it.

Eccentricities are not confined to any party; but when a party becomes established, vagaries are set down to the conduct of irresponsible individuals, by whom nobody is bound; but in the case of an unpopular association every act of folly is considered as its natural outcome.

Of the accredited representatives of Socialism who put S.M. after their names, the first in order of editorial service is Mr. George Alexander Fleming, who was the chief editor of the official journal of the party. Mr. Fleming was a native of Scotland, a man of considerable energy and maturity of self-acquired talent. He wrote as well as he spoke. He was the first in office, and he kept there. He was under no delusions of fervour, as others were liable to be. His talent lay in making the movement safe rather than great, and certainly there was room for his order of skill. He was afterwards connected with journals immediately under his own management, always consistently giving effect to the principles he early entertained. He died in the service of the *Morning Advertiser*.

Mr. Lloyd Jones, who ought to be named next in order of platform distinction, had the repute of having the best voice of any of the social lecturers, and that readiness of speech which

seems the common endowment of Irishmen. He was always regarded as the best debater who appeared on the platform ; and if it was possible to perfect that talent by practice, he certainly had the opportunity, for more discussion fell to his lot than to any other of his compeers. To Mr. Jones belongs the distinction of being the most active to defend social views when its adherents were weakest, and to meet more of the enemy when the enemy were strongest than any other missionary. While he was a Manchester district missionary he had continually to be despatched to meet furious adversaries, or furious audiences. After a venomous tirade was delivered, he would present himself to answer it, when it was matter of common experience that the confident adversary, who had gone up like a rocket in his lecture, came down like a stick in the discussion. Mr. Jones joined the Salford Co-operative Society as early as 1829, and was all his days an influential leader of the movement.

Mr. James Rigby was one of the earliest, merriest, and pleasantest speakers among the missionaries. His vivacity of illustration was remarkable. He had genuine imagination ; not, perhaps, always well in hand. If he did not obscure the facts by the fecundity of his fancy, he cast such a glamour over them that the hearer forgot to look for them. As an expositor of Socialism, he was the most fascinating of all his compeers. His vivacity, his graphic language, his brightness of imagination, his agreeable garrulity, always made him a popular speaker. He was long remembered for his happiness of expressing the immense hopes and prospects of the party without any sense whatever of the limited means which alone were at the command of social reformers to realise them. He first came into notice from the active part he took in the laborious agitation for the Ten Hours' Bill. After the fall of Queenwood, he was associated with Mr. Owen as a personal attendant, having charge of his manuscripts. He was entirely a communist, echoing literally Mr. Owen's material views on that subject ; but when a semi-spiritualism came in after-days to be engrafted upon them by the master, Mr. Rigby proved that, though he was a disciple, he was not a follower in the sense of departing from the ancient way. He was with us when we buried Mr. Owen at Newtown. Among all who stood at that grave, none

were so assiduous, so faithful, so wary, as he. When I went down to relieve him late at night, as he kept watch over his master's tomb, it was with difficulty that he could be induced to go home, until I satisfied him that certain fears which he entertained were all anticipated, and that no unauthorised hands could disturb those honoured remains. His faithful fears dated as far back as the days of Julian Hibbert, at whose death Mr. Baume interfered by virtue of some personal warrant which he was understood to hold, and his head was preserved for purposes of science. All his life Mr. Rigby remained constant to the abstemious habits of his youth, and died at fifty-six years of age, without having tasted animal food. Up to the day of his burial no change from life was observable in his pleasant and placid countenance. Since I have often doubted whether he was really dead when I made an oration over his coffin.

The missionary who excelled all in vigour of speech, in wit, boldness, and dramatic talent, was Charles Southwell, of London, the youngest of thirty-six children, with activity enough on the platform for them all.

The Bishop of Norwich, Dr. Bathurst, was the youngest of thirty-six brothers and sisters.<sup>1</sup> So there was nothing heretical on Mr. Southwell's part in this peculiarity, for which, otherwise, he might have been held accountable. He was more brilliant than relevant. On one occasion he volunteered a lecture on behalf of imprisoned colleagues, from which myself, Maltus Questell Ryall, and William Chilton expected that some aid would arise. A good audience was assembled at the City Road Hall of Science, the same that Mr. Mordan provided for Detrosier. After Southwell had spoken three-quarters of an hour it was remarked by us that he had not arrived at his subject. Half an hour later he concluded amid a storm of applause, when we said to him, "Why, Southwell, you never mentioned your subject." No," he added, "it did not occur to me." And, to do him justice, neither did it occur to his audience till next day, so much had he diverted and entertained them.

Ultimately Mr. Southwell left England, and settled in New Zealand, a singularly unsuitable retreat for so fiery and

<sup>1</sup> *Norwich Mercury*, 1837.



active a spirit, unless he intended to set up as a chieftain. On the stage, on the platform, or in the secular press, he might have found a congenial sphere; but nothing fell to him available except the editorship of a Wesleyan newspaper. It must have been a livelier publication in his hands than its readers had known it before. Its orthodox articles must have been written by proxy. When death befel him, as it did after a few years' sojourn there, he was waited on by members of the proprietary whom he served, to offer him the religious consolations available to that body, and were surprised to be told by their patient that he had edited their paper because no other employment was open to him, but he never undertook to edit their tenets. He, however, preferred to die in his own principles, which were atheistic. He probably never professed to be a Wesleyan, and they took his silence for concurrence.

Frederick Hollick was a young Birmingham man, who cast his lot with the social movement in 1837-8. He and the present writer were townsmen, each engaged in mechanical industry, were fellow-students in the same Mechanics' Institution, both became speakers in the same movement, and were nearly of the same name. But to Mr. Hollick belonged the palm of seeing more things at once, seeing them soon, seeing them clearly, and stating them with a lucidity beyond any compeer of the social platform. When the missionaries were dispersed he went to America, where he studied dentistry and medicine, and published many works on physiology, and acquired both fortune and reputation; sixty years of absence have not diminished the regard in which he was held in England.

Thomas Simmons Mackintosh was a Socialist lecturer of note and popularity. He was a man of considerable scientific reading, and published a book entitled the "Electrical Theory of the Universe," which attracted attention. The simplicity and boldness of his theory seemed true to those who did not understand it, or who did not possess that reach of knowledge necessary to verify so vast a theory. It certainly showed originality and great capacity in focussing the limited electrical knowledge which then existed. Mr. Mackintosh was a ready and animated speaker, with a faculty for vivid and humorous scientific illustration. He ultimately perished in Ottawa, being drowned while bathing in the river in the cold season.

Mr. Alexander Campbell was an earnest, pacific advocate. He was, as most of the co-operative missionaries were, early connected with trade unions. He shared the mystic doctrines of "Being" of Mr. Greaves, and was one of the vegetarians of the Concordium at Ham Common. He trusted himself among the White Quakers. Mr. Campbell is remembered as one of the managers of the Orbiston community; one of his daughters married Mr. William Love, known as the chier Liberal bookseller of Glasgow. Mr. Campbell discovered the principle of distributing profits in stores in proportion to purchasers as early as 1829; which was acted upon in some stores in Scotland. The principle was re-discovered fifteen years later in Rochdale by James Howarth. Mr. Campbell was many years connected with the *Glasgow Sentinel*, a paper established by Robert Buchanan, the social missionary. An excellent three-quarter portrait, in oil, of Mr. Campbell hangs in the hall of the Secular Society, Glasgow, where he was a valued speaker.

Coventry furnished two missionaries, Dr. John Watts and Mr. John Colier Farn. Dr. Watts became distinguished for high character and practicable ability. When two of the editors of the *Oracle of Reason* were in prison, he conducted a publication of an alarming name.<sup>1</sup> The repeal of the taxes upon knowledge was accelerated by the lucid and powerful speeches he made in London and elsewhere upon the economical folly of those imposts. In Manchester he received a valuable testimonial in acknowledgment of political and educational services. Of the Economy of Co-operation he was an original and very suggestive expositor.

Mr. Farn was known as an animated lecturer, familiar alike with co-operative, trades-union, and political questions. He was subsequently connected with newspaper journalism, and at one time held the position of editor of the *Co-operative News*. He continued all his life the same ardent and zealous worker on behalf of the principles which first brought him into distinction.

One of the pleasantest advocates of early Co-operation was Henry Jacques Jeffery, a bright, quick-speaking, energetic

<sup>1</sup> *The Blasphemer*. There was no blasphemy in it. The title was in defiance of the Bishop of Exeter.

lecturer, distinguished for ardour and variety of exposition. He made generous exertions for the defence of his colleagues who incurred imprisonment. Mr. Jeffery was equally known in Edinburgh and London for the fervour with which he espoused social principles. He long held a place of considerable trust in one of the greatest publishing houses in London.

John Green was one of the early lecturers, some time stationed at Liverpool. He was a useful advocate, and took an honest interest in the movement. My recollection of him is very distinct. When a very young man, I had been wandering on foot for purposes of health for some three weeks, and embarking at Liverpool for a short voyage, which, as I had never seen the sea, seemed an immense adventure, a pleasant, homely voice called out to me from the quay, "Mr. Holyoake, Mr. Holyoake." As I had not heard my name for three weeks, I felt like Robinson Crusoe, when he was first addressed by his parrot, and thought so at the time. I was grateful to Mr. Green for that greeting. He afterwards went to America, where, before he had acquired the faculty of seeing two ways at once, necessary in that land, he was cut into halves by a railway train. He held some official position upon the line.

Robert Buchanan was another Scotch advocate who joined the missionary propaganda of 1837. An ardent and ready speaker, he was also addicted to poetry, in which he succeeded better than any of the competitors in verse by whom he was surrounded. After the social movement subsided, Mr. Buchanan became connected with journalism, both in Glasgow and London, until his death a few years ago. His son, Robert Buchanan, had far more than his father's genius, and was a poet, a novelist, and dramatist of accredited reputation.

Another poet who made some noise, and obtained considerable notice among those for whom he sang, was John Garwood, whose protracted performance, "The Force of Circumstances," appeared in many numbers of the weekly publications of the party.

Eben Jones was a young poet, who made several contributions to the *New Moral World*. He really could write readable verses. His poems being, like Shelley's, heretical, contributed strongly to impart that character to the party publishing them, without distinguishing them as unofficial contributions.



One speaker, a man of real capacity, was a tailor, named Robert Spiers. In social condition he, too, was a person to whom any form of the millennium would have been welcome. I first met him at the opening of the Social Institution in Huddersfield, at which I was to speak morning and evening ; but when I saw my name in large letters, rainbow-coloured, on the walls of the town, I was dazed and abashed, and did not make much of the speaking, except for one ten minutes in the evening, when I forgot the placard. I had walked from Sheffield, twenty-six miles, the preceding day, which did not conduce to energy of speech or imagination. But I well remember that Mr. Spiers, who spoke in the afternoon, he being regarded as a secondary person to the luminary who was imported to speak in the morning and evening, amazed me by the mastery of statement which he displayed. In capacity of logical, not merely subtlety of, sequence, but of obvious dependence of one part on the other, and all the parts leaving one whole impression upon the mind, I still think him the ablest lecturer we had.

Napier Bailey was a strange figure, who flitted across the social platform. He had been a Lancashire schoolmaster, and he always remained a schoolmaster. He had not a particle of imagination, but possessed more literary information than any other of his platform colleagues. He was the first and only contributor to the *New Moral World* who quoted Greek. It would be a fortunate thing if everybody who knew Greek and Latin could be allowed to wear some intimation of the fact upon them, that the general public might honour them accordingly without being obliged to recognise the acquirement by quotations which, being assumed to be highly rare and interesting, are therefore presented to ordinary readers in a language they do not understand. Mr. Bailey's article must have been delayed a fortnight while the printer, in a Midland town, where Greek is not the language of the inhabitants, sent to London for the necessary type. Mr. Bailey was an active writer, and communicated a great deal of interesting information to all who read or heard him. As he had far more literary knowledge than the majority of opponents in his time, he silenced more adversaries than any other lecturer by overwhelming them with quotations which they could not answer, because

they could not understand them. Mr. Bailey was the writer of the "Social Reformers' Cabinet Library." He passed away suddenly from the view of men, and has never been heard of since.

G. Simkins, whose name frequently occurs in early reports of the Charlotte Street Institution, was a shoemaker by trade ; a tall, pale, spare-looking man, who looked as if the old world had not done much for him. Like some other lecturers of that time, he took the principles pretty much as he found them ; but if he did not make them plainer he did not obscure them, nor compromise them by extravagance of statement.

Henry Knight was another young speaker, who after a few years of activity went to America. He wrote a series of short letters in explanation of the principles he represented as a missionary, which were by far the freshest and most interesting statement of them produced by any advocate of the time. His papers appeared under the title of "Short Essays on Socialism." Though a very young man, he had the merit of being the first lecturer who attempted to select from the collection of principles set forth by Mr. Owen, those which were essential to the community scheme.

J. R. Cooper, an active newsagent and bookseller of Manchester, was favourably known as a lecturer on social questions. His younger brother, Robert Cooper, became a Social Missionary. He (Robert Cooper) wrote several pamphlets, chiefly on theological subjects, which had a considerable sale. In later years he came into possession of a fortune which was intended for Mr. Southwell, to whom it was first bequeathed. But on his leaving for New Zealand, Mr. Fletcher, in his disappointment, bequeathed it to the present writer, who was Mr. Southwell's coadjutor on the *Oracle of Reason*, who held Mr. Fletcher's will two years. Acting on treacherous information, which Mr. Fletcher did not know to be untrue, he altered the will in favour of Mr. Cooper, and, dying suddenly, Mr. Cooper inherited it. The giver honourably remembered Mrs. Emma Martin's children by a small legacy to each.

One of the writers who contributed most to the pleasant information and poetic amusement of the *New Moral World*, was a gentleman who signed himself "Pencil'em," with a knowledge of, and a taste for, art and literature. His verses had

a pleasant sparkle of wit and humour, which often relieved the perennial disquisitions upon the Five Fundamental Facts, and Twenty Laws of Human Nature. Some who have acquired distinction have owed the inspiration and practice of art to him. He held an official situation at South Kensington, in which his attainments were beneficial to the nation.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Wheeler attracted considerable attention by well-reasoned lectures, delivered in 1829, in a chapel near Finsbury Square.

Miss Reynolds was another lady lecturer who excited great admiration for her effective speaking. She afterwards became Mrs. Chapel Smith, went to America, and is understood to be the same lady who frequently wrote to the *Boston Investigator*, and whose letters are dated from New Harmony, Indiana.

Among the new writers of 1835 appears one under the signature of "Kate," afterwards the wife of Mr. Goodwyn Barmby. "Kate's" papers were always fresh, pleasant, and sensible.

In 1841, Mary Hennell wrote an interesting "Outline or the various Social Systems and Communities which have been founded on the principle of Co-operation." It appeared as an appendix to Charles Bray's "Philosophy of Necessity." Sara Hennell, her sister, has written many works of considerable originality and literary completeness.

Madame D'Arusmont was the most accomplished and distinguished woman, who personally identified herself with the propagation of social views. As Frances Wright, her lectures were popular both in England and America. She was known as the friend and associate of General Lafayette, and in the days of slavery she bought lands and endeavoured to establish a free negro community at Nashoba. She had a commanding presence, and was a cultivated and eloquent lecturess in days when only women of great courage ventured to lecture at all. She is reported as declaring, in 1836, in favour of the immediate abolition of Southern slavery. This occurred at Tammany Hall. Mr. J. S. Mill held her in regard as one of the most

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Wallas ("Pencil'em") was an artist in Bilston. As a Social Missionary it was my duty to examine all persons joining a branch. I remember passing Mr. Wallas, about 1841, who probably knew more of most things than I did myself. My brother William, who became Curator of the Art Schools of the Royal Academy, and a painter of repute in his day, owed his art education to Mr. Wallas.



important women of her day, and pointed this out to the present writer on her last visit to England.<sup>1</sup>

Notable among the ladies who have been social lecturers was Mrs. Emma Martin, who had wit and the courage of several men, and delivered lectures in the stormiest times and to the most dangerously disposed audiences. She was a small lady, of attractive expression, with dark luminous eyes, a pleasant, far-reaching voice, and a womanly woman. The vivacious "Vivian," of the *Leader*, whom the public now know as G. H. Lewes, with various admiration under his own name, used to say that he disliked "bony priestesses, learned in all the ologies and destitute of hips." Co-operators have not been wanting in beautiful advocates; but they remembered that wise men were not always beautiful, and they esteemed greatly a pleasant mind. Mrs. Martin studied medicine and practised with success, and during the cholera of 1849 displayed great courage, as she did in everything.

Among the well-known pioneers of the earlier period was E. T. Craig, mentioned for the intrepidity shown by him at Ralahine. The following letter from Lady Noel Byron to him serves to explain the diversified nature of the social work done in those days, and the respect in which Mr. Craig was held by eminent persons. The honourable and practical interest Lady Byron took in promoting the betterment of the humbler classes led her to give him the direction of an industrial agricultural school, which she founded at Ealing Grove, on land formerly belonging to the Duke of Newcastle. Her ladyship's letter was as follows:—

"SIR,—I had the satisfaction of receiving your letter yesterday. After Mr. Finch had informed me of the possibility of obtaining your valuable assistance I addressed you on the subject, directing my letter to Mr. Barry's residence (Glandore, Ireland), where you were supposed to be. I am, however, glad to find that you are not so far distant, and if you feel disposed to enter into the scheme, of which I send you the prospectus, I shall be happy to defray the expenses of your journey from Manchester, in order that you may communicate with the gentlemen who are engaged in the undertaking. I do not con-

<sup>1</sup> Her famous career as a foundress of a community was described by Mrs. Trollope in 1829. See *Co-operative News*, July 30, 1904.

sider myself as having a right to settle anything individually, as I am only one of the parties concerned, and have not the knowledge requisite to direct the arrangements of such an institution. It has, however, been my advice that the master should be found *before* the land was bought or rented (for that point is not decided), and before any of the economical details were finally determined upon ; because I thought that the person chosen to conduct the establishment would be the best adviser on such questions. The locality will be within eight miles of London. The amount of funds not yet ascertained. You will therefore perceive that there is not at present an absolute certainty of the *whole* of the above plan being carried into effect ; but there can scarcely be a doubt that the day-school, with land attached to it, might be speedily established if a competent director were found.

"I am strongly impressed with the belief of your possessing the energy, experience, and benevolence necessary to execute our design. The remuneration to be afforded you must depend in part on the success and extension of the school. You will be enabled to form your own judgment if you take the trouble to come to London. I could see you either there or here, and will refer you in the first place to a friend of mine, who feels great interest in the agricultural school plan."

Mr. Craig accepted the appointment from Lady Byron, and while the buildings were being prepared he went on a commission to the Continent to examine the industrial schools of Rotterdam, and of Switzerland, including the famous one of E. de Fellenburg, at Hofwyl, near Berne. Lady Byron's school, which he organised at Ealing Grove, on the plan pursued at Ralahine, obtained considerable distinction, and was much visited. The Duchess of Roxburgh, the Lady Lytton Bulwer, Ada Byron, Lord King, Sir William Molesworth, and Mrs. Somerville were among those who came.

In the course of this narrative it will necessarily happen that many persons will be omitted who really are entitled to a place in it. A difficulty which besets every writer is, that whatever trouble he takes to be well informed, he will not escape giving evidence that he does not know everything. My care has been to include all those whose services were most obvious and influential in the movement.

Many will remember the familiar names of Mr. Vines and

Mr. Atkinson, who promoted associated homes, as they did in earlier years ; Mr. Alger and Mr. Braby, long actively connected with the movement ; Walter Newall, long held in regard as one of the general secretaries of the central board ; Mr. Nash, a familiar name to the friends of Labour Exchanges ; Mr. Ardell, one time treasurer in community days ; Lawrence Pitkeithly, of Huddersfield, alike regarded by Chartists and Socialists ; H. Constable, an earlier and later friend of the old cause ; J. Cross, of Shoreditch, who lost two fortunes in his later years, and gallantly earned a third, and equally, rich or poor, worked for the promotion of social ideas ; Mr. Austin, who, like Philip O. Skene, wore himself out with his enthusiasm ; Robert Adair, whom the poet Wordsworth selected to give the first appointment he bestowed, when he became Her Majesty's Distributor of Stamps. Many others in the chief towns of England and Scotland might, if space permitted, be named for services by which this generation is benefited, and for which they obtained no requital.

Several of the missionaries were remarkable instances of monotony of power. As young men they manifested sudden and unusual ability. They "struck twelve all at once," and never struck anything after. They were a sort of petrified publicists. Some of these social apostles were pleasant persons to know, but a few of the most endurable were the least worthy, inasmuch as they gave thought and talent to their cause, but did not consider how far they could advance it by giving it also the tribute of their conduct. They did not consider that their credit and connections belonged to it.

Others adorned their principles by their career ; they took, as it were, the weight of the disordered world upon their shoulders. I remember one, and he was an outlying propagandist, who had the martyr-spirit without the martyr-manner. Like Talleyrand, he waited for the hour of action, and never acted before it came. He knew that things were going round, and he watched until the turn came for him to do his part, and he did it with the full force those only can exert who have reserved their strength for the blow. He was thin, poor, and seedy ; but even his seediness had a certain charm of taste, cleanness, and care. There was no seediness in his soul. His spirits were always bright.



The majority of these social advocates had clear, strong, worldly sense. Their principles and conduct refuted everything which the world commonly alleged against communists. They were innovators without hatred, advocating change without bitterness or selfishness.

Mr. Fleming challenged Richard Carlile to discussion; Lloyd Jones also met him. Mr. Green challenged a Mr. Halliwell, of Oldham. Mr. Haslam "challenged all the ministers of the Gospel in the country," and other missionaries challenged everybody else who had been omitted. Mr. Booth has collected statistics of the propagandist activity of this party from 1839 to 1841. In two years and a half two millions of tracts were circulated. At Manchester one thousand were distributed at public meetings every Sunday. In London 40,000 were given away in one year. During the Birmingham Congress half a million were dispersed. Fifty thousand copies of Mr. Owen's manifesto in reply to the Bishop of Exeter were sold. The outline of the rational system was translated into German, Polish, and Welsh. At one meeting £50 was received for the sale of pamphlets. During one year fifty formal discussions were held with the clergy. During another 1,450 lectures were delivered, of which 604 were upon theology and ethics. Three hundred and fifty towns were regularly visited by missionaries, and the country was divided into fourteen missionary districts. This was genuine-propagandist activity and intrepidity. If collision of thought leads to enlightenment, the co-operators certainly promoted it. Every hall in the kingdom that could be hired resounded with debate; the corner of every street had its group of disputants; every green and open place where speakers could hold forth was noisy with controversy; no fireside was silent; pulpits were animated; the press abounded with articles; Unitarians in those days were less Evangelical than now and mercifully helpful of secular improvement, and at all times more liberal than any other English sect, often opening their chapels and schoolrooms to lectures and even discussions. Often social lectures had to be delivered in the streets, in the market-place, and often in a field belonging to some fearless friend of free opinion in the town. Though most of the social reformers were total abstainers, they had to occupy rooms in public-houses. Respectable innkeepers

were afraid of the licensing magistrates, who commonly threatened them with the loss of their license. The leading advocates of temperance had often to go down obscure, miserable passages, jostling against beery people frequenting the house.

Theologians would accept an act of liberality from others, but would not show it in return. When the Rev. Edward Irving and his followers were deprived of their own church, they were admitted into the Gray's Inn Institution ; but when the co-operators wanted to hold a meeting only in the school-room of the Rev. J. Innes, of Camberwell, a minister of the same church, they were refused it. It was frequently the lot of the social advocates to find themselves in the streets ; sometimes they met in an old barn, or a back room, lying far down a mysterious court, where the audience could ill find their way, and had often more trouble to get out than get in. Persons were often sent to break up the meeting by violence, and attack the speakers outside on leaving the place. The ascent to the lecture-room was often up a rickety ladder, with a penny candle outside, which was always blowing out, to indicate to the public the Hole in the Wall, through which they were to enter. Inside, two or three miserable candles, stuck up among the rafters with soft clay, shed flickering and precarious light over the interior. The lecturer (on the subject of the New World) had to stand upon an old table, which, when he mounted it, was discovered to have but three legs, which was generally propped up by some enthusiastic disciple, who put his knee under it ; but when he was carried away by some point which his friend on the table made successfully, he joined in the applause, which altered his position, and let the orator down. In some towns a desolate theatre was the only place that could be obtained, and it was sometimes necessary, as in Whitehaven, when the present writer lectured there, to fortify it the day before the lecture, and to select, as a sort of body-guard, those converts to the new views who had the thickest heads, in the event of bludgeons being employed ; as the audience threatened to assemble with stones in their pockets, I left my friends in the wings, and presented myself on the platform alone, judging that only good marksmen would be able to hit a single target. Mr. Owen, Alexander Campbell, and other lecturers incurred

far more serious danger. Sometimes the lecture-room was situated, as in Leeds, over a series of butchers' shops, which in summer-time gave a carnivorous odour to the principles promulgated above. It was a common thing to find the place of meeting over a stable, when a stranger entering would be struck by the flavour of the principles before hearing them explained.

Two movements of great hope failed through very opposite conduct—the associative colonies and the mechanics' institutions. The co-operators opened their doors to all sorts of discussion, and the mechanics' institutions closed theirs against any.

As social speakers welcomed all comers, they had to encounter a strange assortment of adversaries. Now and then a fat disputant appeared, and very welcome his presence was. We never had a large speaker among our advocates, which was a great disadvantage. It would have suggested a well-fed system. Obesity has weight in more senses than one. A fat look is imposing. A mere self-confident turn of a rotund head has the effect of an argument. An attenuated visage always seems illogical to the multitude, while a mellow voice rolls over an audience like a conclusive sequence.

The early advocates, like many others, who have done the world some service, and made a lasting name in it, were better inspired than informed. Many of them had no more notion than Jesus had of political economy, or the Apostles had of the manufacturing system, and often talked beside the time and needs of the day. It was, nevertheless, freely owned that the missionary representatives of Mr. Owen's views not only held their own, but made important captures from the enemy. Mr. Owen himself, when he had relinquished public life, continued the most untiring travelling advocate of the time; and his addresses were undoubtedly successful, and excited both interest and enthusiasm wherever he appeared. When adversaries appeared after his lectures, he always proved equal to returning a prompt and effective reply. For instance, when lecturing in Edinburgh in 1838, one of the acute opponents, always to be met with in that city, derided Mr. Owen's statement, that human beings could be trained to believe anything ever so absurd and contradictory. "Is it possible," demanded a sharp-tongued querist, "to train



an individual to believe that two and two make five?" "We need not, I think," said Mr. Owen, "go far for an answer. I think all of us know many persons who are trained to believe that three make one, and think very ill of you if you differ from them." This was a good instance of his repartee. The answer seemed most obvious when it was made, but it occurred to nobody till it was given.

It was no uncommon thing for an adverse hearer to be wantonly offensive, and plead that "he was the creature of circumstances over which he had no control," when a vigorous adherent of ready wit would reply—"That's very true, we are all in the same case, and your behaviour is a circumstance which compels me to knock you down"—and in a moment the adversary would be reflecting on the floor. Anon a disputant shot like a meteor over the darkness of debate. Some men's thoughts are like matches, they ignite by the mere attrition of sentences, and throw light on the dim places of an argument. Other men's never ignite at all. Some have fusee ideas, and smoulder merely. Others have tar minds, and give out more odour and smoke than flame. Now and then a man would get up and strike his arguments together like the old flint and tinder box, producing more noise than sparks. Occasionally a speaker burnt with a strong, steady, flame of speech, which both lighted and warmed every one, and the hearer saw clearer ever after. There are hearers with indiarubber minds, which stretch with a discourse. Some understandings are like porcelain, and crack if you hit them with a hard syllogism—and the parts never unite any more. There are speakers whose influence, if not their intellect, is in their throats, and their wild, strong, musical cadences charm the ear. They who listen do not well know what they have said, and speakers do not know themselves, and do not need to know. Their speech is applauded like a song, of which no one knows the words. Others speak like a railway whistle, and impart knowledge and the headache together. The scatter-brained men would come forward in force, and some with no brains at all. Not infrequently a disputant did not know what the point was he was replying to; or if he did, his speech, like Mrs. Gamp's, went elsewhere, and not there. We had all sorts of opponents, lay and

clerical. Some would swell the truth until the audience thought there was something the matter with it ; others thinned it until it seemed in a decline, while the rough-handed dislocated it and made it appear out of joint.

Many people are inclined to take a poetic view of life : and so long as they keep their feet upon the earth they are the most agreeable persons to know. Their innovatory vivacity renders progress brilliant. When, however, they leave the earth it is not worth while looking up in the air after them. There is nothing to gain until they alight. There used to be whole meetings in which there were no persons on the ground, they were all up above. A man thoroughly sane is a very interesting person. He stands firm upon the earth, and you know where to find him. He sees things as they are, and the people who do that are rare. They are the spectacles of their friends, enabling the dim or dazed to look discerningly and steadily at what is before them. A wise man consults the sane seeing man as he would a telescope, when he wishes to make out the danger appearing in the uncertain distance.

It is one of the lessons of party experience to perceive that the loftiest precepts have but limited force, as a rule hearers need to be educated to receive them. Only partial results ought to have been expected until this was done, whereas no doubt was entertained of the immediate and permanent effect of right principles. It was thought that reason would operate at once, and for ever influence the mind which apprehended it. It was not foreseen that only very powerful minds act on principles from energy of personal insight. New opinion is a burden which few men continue to carry unless they are instructed in all its advantages as well as disadvantages, and enter upon the duty with their eyes fully open to what will follow, then hostility gives them no surprise. In the enthusiastic period of a movement principles are masters of the advocates, instead of the advocates being masters of the principles. It was debate, and debate alone, that taught co-operators this lesson ; and where they have learned it Co-operation advances.

Off-hand advocates trusted to a sort of Wesleyan readiness and impulse, and accomplished what they did more by fervour than by art. On the canvas on which they worked they put

in some figures of great force, but they executed no finished picture of power. Cabet, who succeeded Mr. Owen in order of time, was an equable, but mild, delineator of social life ; he was the most practical and coherent of French world-makers. Nothing was produced in the literature of English Socialism comparable to the writings of Louis Blanc.

At times learned lecturers appeared among us. Some were lawyers, who endowed the new system with attributes of categorical profundity, which held us all in amazement. There was, in what they said, a protracted coherence, an illimitable lucidity, which compelled ordinary hearers to fall out of the line of proof on the way, exhausted, and enthusiastic.

No one continues a propagandist unless he be a person of courage, industry, and self-denial. In the case of new thought most people do not like to think at all ; others, who have no minds to think with, are still more difficult to deal with. You cannot convert vacuity ; and you have to create mind by teaching the very elementary principles of thinking.

If a man's mind moves on some hinge of prejudice, you have to provide that it turns on some pivot of principle. In Co-operation new objects, new feelings, new habits had to be proposed. Men had to be shown that their welfare and security were best attained by an arrangement of business, which gave fair advantages to others.

A propagandist is an agent of ideas, a cause of change, a precursor of progress. To do his work well, he must have some mastery of his own language, for grammar is merely the law of intelligible speech. He must know how to set his facts in the order in which they can be seen as he sees them ; and able to reason upon his facts, when he has set them forth, else their purport can never be enforced. The practical effect of grammar is economy in speech ; the practical effect of logic is economy in thinking. The propagandist has to remember that his life is an argument. A man may give good advice who never follows it, as a finger-post may point the right way though it never moves in that direction. But he who is seen to do himself what he counsels, will always have more influence over men than those who say one thing and do another. There is a sin of consistency when a man professes opinions after he sees their error, not liking to own



his altered convictions. But consistency between conviction and conduct is a very different thing. Inconsistency between belief and practice is hypocrisy, whether before man or God. He who urges others to be true, should be true himself. Hence he must be at the service of the principles he proposes to advance. The Italian proverb says, thoughtfully, "Beware of being too good." There seems that no harm could come of that. When a man acts disinterestedly among others who do not, they will disbelieve him, for none believe heartily in what they do not feel capable of themselves ; and these persons, finding the conduct of others a reproach to themselves, descry it. A propagandist must take this as he takes other risks, and do the best he can. He will be believed in the end if he keeps doing the right thing to the best of his power. So that a propagandist should either incur no family obligations like Mazzini, or count upon the pain of involving them in consequences of his own convictions, which they may not share, and yet will have to bear the penalty, and he be helpless to prevent it. The wife and children may be nobly willing to share any consequences which may result through the father maintaining his convictions, and count the bearing of an honest name an honourable inheritance. But these cases are not common. Privation, the consequence of social exclusion, comes in so many ways that, however bravely borne, it must be painful to the propagandist to contemplate. He who chooses to embark in the service of mankind must make up his mind to this ; and he had better know it from the beginning. There may come regard and honour, before which all days of peril and labour pale in the memory ; but these are happy accidents on which no man may count.

The reader can now form his own opinion of the school of Social Improvers, whose careers and fortunes we have now followed through the Pioneer Period. They fought not for their own hand, but for the hand of the people. They taught the new doctrine of self-help and industrial emancipation. Milton, who had a militant spirit, who could not think of heaven without thinking of the fighting there, whose spirit strode the earth in stormy times, understood better than most men, as he wrote—

"Peace hath her victories,  
Not less renowned than those of war."

And this is the victory the Social Pioneers won ; Louis Blanc, in his "Organisation of Labour," began with the impassioned cry, "Christ has come ; but when cometh salvation ?" It has been this long-promised, much-needed, long-delayed, material salvation, which these social propagandists have advanced.

## CHAPTER XIII

## FORGOTTEN WORKERS

"By my hearth I keep a sacred nook  
 For gnomes and dwarfs, duck-footed waddling elves  
 Who stitched and hammered for the weary man  
 In days of old. And in that piety  
 I clothe ungainly forms inherited  
 From toiling generations, daily bent  
 At desk, or plough, or loom, or in the mine,  
 In pioneering labours for the word."

GEORGE ELIOT, *A Minor Prophet*.

THE Pioneer Period in every great movement best displays the aims, the generosity of service, the impulse of passion, the mistakes of policy, the quality and force of character, of leaders and followers. Any one conversant with struggling movements knows that most of the errors which arose were due to the actors never having been told of the nature and responsibilities of their enterprise. Ten men err from pure ignorance where one errs from wilfulness or incapacity. How often I have heard others exclaim, how often have I exclaimed myself, when a foolish thing had been said, or a wrong thing had been done, why did not some one who had had this experience before tell us of this? Co-operators who master and hold fast openly, and always, to a policy of truth, toleration, relevance, and equity, succeed.

The unremembered workers described in the words of the poetess, placed at the head of this chapter, have abounded in the social movement. Less fortunate than the religious devotee, who sailed more or less with the popular current, the social innovator has few friends. Rulers distrusted him. His pursuit of secular good, caused him to be ill-spoken of by spiritual authorities, and he had no motive to inspire him save



the desire or doing good to others. Too much is not to be made of those who die in discharge of well-understood duty. In daily life numerous persons run risks of a like nature, and sometimes perish in the public service. To know how to estimate those who stand true we must take into sight those who never stand at all—who, the moment loss or peril is foreseen, crawl away like vermin into holes of security. These are the rabbit-minded reformers, who flee at the first sound of danger, or wait to see a thing succeed before they join it. Those who flee a struggling cause are a great army compared with those who fight.

Yet the world is not selfish or cold. It is like the aspects of Nature : large parts are sterile, bleak, inhospitable ; yet, even there, the grandeur of view and majestic grimness delight the strong. In other parts of physical Nature—warmth, light, foliage, flowers, make glad and gay the imagination. So in society—strong, tender, wise men will give discriminating aid to strugglers below them ; strugglers, indeed, perish unhelped, oftentimes because they are unnoticed, rather than because of the inhumanity of the prosperous. There are, as experience too well tells, men who do not want to help others ; while there are more who do not help, simply not knowing how. But there are others, and it is honest to count them, whom affluence does not make insensible, and who feel for the poor.

The agitation had for leaders many disinterested gentlemen who not only meant what they said in sympathy, but were prepared to give, and did give, their fortunes to promote it. There was not a man of mark among them who expected to, or tried to, make money for himself by these projects of social improvement. Some, as Abram Combe and William Thompson, gave not only money but life. Others absolutely divested themselves of their fortunes in the cause. They indeed believed that they were founding a system of general competence, and that such share as was secured to others would accrue to them ; and with this prospect they were content. Some of them might have retained stately homes and have commanded deference by the splendour of their lives. And when their disinterested dream was not realised, their fortune squandered, and disappointment, and even penury overtook them, as happened in some cases, they never regretted the part they had

taken, and died predicting that others would come after them, who, wiser and more fortunate than they, would attain to the success denied to them. Gentlemen connected with Co-operation were not wanting in the spirit of self-sacrifice, who died, like Mr. Cowell Stepney, of caring for everybody's interest but their own.<sup>1</sup> This is not at all a common disease in any class, and takes very few people off. Yet few are remembered with the reverence accorded to those who die these deaths. Were their services understood they would receive honour exceeding that of those greeted by—

"The patched and plodding citizen,  
Waiting upon the pavement with the throng,  
While some victorious world-hero makes  
Triumphant entry; and the peal of shouts . . .  
Run like a storm of joy along the streets!  
He says, 'God bless him!' . . .  
As the great hero passes. . . .  
Perhaps the hero's deeds have helped to bring  
A time when every honest citizen  
Shall wear a coat unpatched."<sup>2</sup>

Ignoring certain noisy adherents, who infest every movement, whose policy is conspicuousness, and whose principle is "what they can get"; who seek only to serve themselves, never, except by accident, serving anybody else; who clutch at every advantage, without giving one grateful thought, or even respectful word, to those who have created the advantage they enjoy—my concern is not for these adherents, whose very souls are shabby, and who would bring salvation itself into discredit were it extended to them. My last care is for the honest, unobtrusive workers, who drudged, without ceasing, in the "cause"—who devoted the day of rest to correspondence with unknown inquirers. The just-minded took the services with gratitude; the selfish took them as their right, never asking at what cost it was accorded. Knowing that self-help meant self-thinking, and that no deliverance would come if the people left it to others to think for them—these advocates counted it a first duty to awaken in their fellows the inspira-

<sup>1</sup> Eldest son of Sir Cowell Stepney, who, until his death, attended all the co-operative and international congresses of working men wherever held in England or in Europe, and who corresponded with all the social reformers of the world, and sent them publications bearing upon the movement.

<sup>2</sup> "A Minor Prophet," by George Eliot.

tion of self-action. But in thus making themselves so far the Providence of others, the most generous of them had no time left to be a Providence to themselves. But it is not for us to forget the self-forgetting, whose convictions were obligations, and whose duty was determined by the needs of others. During the ninety years over which this history travels there have been humble compeers who drudged in stores during what hours fell to them after their day's work was done. They travelled from street to street, or from village to village, on Sundays, to collect the pence which started the stores. They gave more than they could afford to support periodicals, which never paid their conductors, for the chance of useful information thus reaching others. For themselves, they reaped in after-days dismay and disregard at their own fireside, for their disinterested and too ardent preference of others' interests. Many gave their nights to the needful, but monotonous duties of committees, and to speaking at meetings at which few attended, returning late and weary to cheerless rooms. Some were worn out prematurely, and died unattended in obscure lodgings. Some lingered out their uncheered days on the precarious aid occasionally sent them by those who happened to remember that they were benefiting by the peril which had brought the old propagandists low. Not a few of them, after speeches of fiery protest on behalf of independence, in political movements to which they were also attracted, spent months and years in the indignity of prison, and at last died on a poor-house bed, and were laid in a pauper's grave.<sup>1</sup> I have met

<sup>1</sup> One might give many instances. One is that of George White, of Bradford, who died in the poor-house in Sheffield. Had I known of his death at the time I would have asked Mr. Gathorne Hardy, who was then Home Secretary, for leave to remove his body and lay it by the side of Holberry, the Chartist, who died in prison and was buried with public honour in Sheffield. White was well known to Mr. Hardy's father, who had some respect for the vigorous and turbulent Irish Chartist. We were both in prison at the same time, and it was arranged that he who was out first, his wife should make pies and take to the other. As I was at liberty first, many savoury pies found their way to White's prison. I have no doubt he died dreaming that more pies were coming to him, for he died very desolate. For years, if danger threatened us in public meeting, George White brought up his Old Guards. On one occasion, when the great discussion in which the Birmingham Socialists were concerned, White's detachment of the Old Guards attended five nights, and, although poor men, paid for admission to the best places; and when the final fray came the respectable pious belligerents in every part of Beardsworth's Repository found a strong-handed Chartist behind them, and the enemy found themselves outside the hall on their way home before they knew where



their names in struggling periodicals advocating social and political progress. Many of them were my comrades. Foreseeing their fate, I often tried to mitigate their devotion. I stood later by the dying bed of some of them, and spoke at the burial of many. They lie in unremembered graves. But there was inspiration in their career which has quickened the pulses of industry. Though the distant footfall of the coming triumph of their order never reached their ear, they believed not less in its march.

they were. George White gave the signal to the Old Guards from the platform, where he and his trusty colleagues did execution among the clerical rioters there, who, when the police were introduced, had all disappeared. Honour to the generous Old Guards, who stood up for fair play although they were not partisans of the doctrines in dispute !

PART II  
*THE CONSTRUCTIVE PERIOD*  
1845-1878





## CHAPTER XIV

## THE STORY OF A DEAD MOVEMENT

"A new mind is first infused into society; . . . is breathed from individual to individual, from family to family—it traverses districts—and new men, unknown to each other, arise in different parts. . . . At last a word is spoken which appeals to the hearts of all—each answers simultaneously to the call—a compact body is collected under one standard, a watchword is given, and every man knows his friend."—THE FIRST LORD LYTON.

MOVEMENTS, like men, die—some a natural, some a violent, death. Some movements perish of intellectual rickets, from lack of vitality; or, falling into blind hands, never see their opportunities. It is true of movements as of men—those who act and do not think, and those who think and do not act—alike require an early coffin. In days of social storm, insurrection, revolution, every word of counsellors entitled to be heard has significance. Change is but a silent storm, ever beating, ever warning men to provide for it, and they who stand still are swept away. But movements do not often die in their beds—they are assassinated in the streets. Error, fed upon ignorance, and inspired by spite, is commonly strong and unscrupulous. Truth must fight to live. There is no marching on without going forward and confronting the enemy. Those who know the country and are resolute, may occupy more of it than they foresee. It is a delusion to think that pioneers have all the ground to clear. Men's heads are mostly vacant, and not a few are entirely empty. In more cases than are imagined there is a brain-hunger for ideas. Co-operation, after thirty years of valorous vicissitude, died, or seemed to die, in 1844-5.

The busy, aspiring movement of Co-operation, so long chequered by ardour and despondency, was rapidly subsiding

into silence and decay. The little armies on the once militant plain had been one after another defeated and disbanded. The standards, which had been carried defiantly with some daring acclaim, had fallen one by one; and in many cases the standard-bearers had fallen with them. For a few years to come no movement is anywhere observable. Hardly a solitary insurgent is discernible in any part of the once animated horizon. The sun of industrial hope, which kept so many towns aglow, has now gone down. The very air is bleak. The *Northern Star*,<sup>1</sup> lurid and glaring (which arose in Leeds, to guide the Political Pioneers of Lancashire and Yorkshire), is becoming dim. The *Star in the East* promising to indicate that among the managers of Wisbech a new deliverer<sup>2</sup> has come, has dropped out of the firmament. The hum of the *Working Bee* is no more heard in the fens of Cambridgeshire. The *Morning Star*—that appeared at Ham Common, shining upon a dietary of vegetables and milk—has fallen out of sight.<sup>3</sup> “Journals” are kept no more—“Calendars” no longer have dates filled in—“Co-operative Miscellanies” have ceased—“Mirrors” fail to reflect the faces of the Pioneers—*The Radical* has torn up its roots—*The Commonweal* has no one to care for it—believers in the *New Age* are extinct—*The Shepherd* is gathering his eccentric flocks into a new fold<sup>4</sup>—readers of the *Associate* have discontinued to assemble together—“Monthly Magazines” forget to come out—“Gazettes” are empty—“Heralds” no more go forth—“Beacons” find that the day of warning is over—the *Pioneer* has fallen in the last expedition of the forlorn hope which he led—there is nothing further to “Register,” and the *New Moral World* is about to be sold by auction—Samuel Bower has eaten all his peas—Mr. Etzler has carried his wondrous machines of Paradise to Venezuela—Joseph Smith has replaced his wig—Mr. Baume has sold his monkey—and the Frenchman’s Island, where infants were to be suckled by machinery, has not

<sup>1</sup> Of Feargus O'Connor.

<sup>2</sup> Edited by Mr. James Hill, related by marriage to Dr. Southwood Smith.

<sup>3</sup> This was many years before the appearance of the London *Morning Star* newspaper, which was never so much appreciated as when it was missed.

<sup>4</sup> The *Family Herald*.

inappropriately become the site of the Pentonville Penitentiary. The "Association of All Classes of All Nations" has not a member left upon its books. Of the seventy thousand Chartist land-dreamers, who had been actually enrolled, nothing is to remain in the public mind save the memory of Snigg's End! Labour Exchanges have become bywords—the Indiana community is as silent as the waters of the Wabash by its side—Orbiston is buried in the grave of Abram Combe—Ralahine has been gambled away—the Concordia is a strawberry garden—Manea Fen has sunk out of sight—the President of Queenwood is encamping in the lanes—the blasts of the "Heralds of Community" have died in the air—the notes of the "Trumpet Calls" have long been still, and the trumpeters themselves are dead. It may be said, as the Lord of the Manor of Rochdale<sup>1</sup> wrote of a more historic desolation:—

"The tents are all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpets unblown."

Time, defamation, losses, distrust, dismay, appear to have done their work. Never human movement seemed so very dead as this of Co-operation. Its lands were all sold, its script had no more value, its orators no more hearers. Not a pulse could be felt throughout its whole frame, not a breath could be discerned on any enthusiastic mirror held to its mouth. The most scientific punctures in its body failed to elicit any sign of vitality. Even Dr. Richardson would have pronounced it a case of pectoral death.<sup>2</sup> I felt its cold and rigid hand in Glasgow—the last "Social Missionary" station which existed. Though experienced in the pathology of dead movements, the case seemed to me suspicious of decease. Wise Americans came over to look at it, and declared with a shrug that it was a "gone coon." Social physicians pronounced life quite extinct. Political economists avowed the creature had never lived. The newspapers, more observant of it, thought it would never recover, which implied that, in their opinion, it had been alive. The clergy, content that

<sup>1</sup> Lord Byron.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. B. W. Richardson maintains that men may recover from glacial death, from pectoral death never.



"Socialism" was reported to be gone, furnished with delighted alacrity uncomfortable epitaphs for its tombstone.

Yet all the while the vital spark was there. Efforts beyond its strength had brought upon it suspended animation. The first sign of latent life was discovered in Rochdale. In the meantime the great comatose movement lay stretched, out of the world's view, but not abandoned by a few devoted Utopians, who had crept from under the slain. Old friends administered to it, familiar faces bent over it. For unnoted years it found voice in the *Reasoner*, which said of it one thing always—"If it be right it can be revived by devotion. Truth never dies except it be deserted." Then a great consultation arose among the social medicine men. The regular physicians of the party, who held official or missionary diplomas, were called in. The licentiates of the platform also attended. The subscribing members of the Community Society, the pharmacutists of Co-operation, were at hand. They were the chemists and druggists of the movement, who compounded the recipes of the social doctors, when new prescriptions were given out. Opinions were given by the learned advisers, as the symptoms of the patient seemed to warrant them. As in graver consultations, some of the prescriptions were made rather with a view of differing from a learned brother than of saving the patient. The only thing in which the faculty present in this case agreed was, that nobody proposed to bleed the invalid. There was clearly no blood to be got out of him. The first opinion pronounced was that mischief had arisen through want of orthodoxy in Communism. It was thought that if it was vaccinated, by a clergyman of some standing, with the Thirty-nine Articles, it might get about again; and Mr. Minter Morgan produced a new design of a parallelogram with a church in it. It was shown to Mr. Hughes. Some Scotch doctors advised the Assembly's "Shorter Catechisms." A missionary, who had been a Methodist, thought that an infusion of Wesleyan fervour and faith might help it. A Swedenborgian said he knew the remedy, when "Shepherd" Smith<sup>1</sup> persisted that the doctrine of Analogies would set the thing right. Then the regular faculty gave their opinions.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. J. E. Smith, who edited the *Shepherd* before he edited the *Family Herald*.

Mr. Ironside attested with metallic voice that recovery was possible. Its condition was so weak that, Pater Oldham<sup>1</sup>—with a beard as white and long as Merlin's—prescribed for it celibacy and a vegetarian diet. Charles Lane raised the question, Should it be “stimulated with milk”? which did not seem likely to induce in it any premature action. James Pierrepont Greaves suggested that its “inner life” should be nurtured on a preparation of Principles of Being, of which he was sole proprietor. Mr. Galpin, with patriarchal stateliness, administered to it grave counsel. Thomas Whittaker presented a register of its provincial pulsations, which he said had never ceased. Mr. Craig suggested fresh air, and if he meant commercial air there was need of it. George Simpson, its best financial secretary, advised it neither to give credit nor take it, if it hoped to hold its own. Dr. John Watts prescribed it a business dietary, flavoured with political economy, which was afterwards found to strengthen it. John Colier Farn, who had the Chartist nature, said it wanted robust agitation. Alexander Campbell, with Scotch pertinacity, persisted that it would get round with a little more lecturing. Dr. Travis thought its recovery certain, as soon as it comprehended the Self-determining power of the will. Charles Southwell chafed at the timorous retractions of some of his colleagues, avowed that the imprisonment of some of them would do the movement good. William Chilton believed that persecution alone would reanimate it, and bravely volunteered to stand by the cause in case it occurred. Maltus Questell Ryall, generously indignant at the imprisonment of certain of his friends, spoke as Gibbon was said to have written—“as though Christianity had done him a personal injury”—predicted that Socialism would be itself again if it took courage and looked its clerical enemies square in the face. Mr. Allsop, always for boldness, counselled it to adopt Strafford's motto of “Thorough.” George Alexander Fleming surmised that its proper remedy was better obedience to the Central Board. James Rigby tried to awaken its attention by spreading before its eyes romantic pictures of Communistic life. Lloyd Jones admonished it, in sonorous tones, to have more faith in associative duty. Henry

<sup>1</sup> The attenuated and picturesque Principal of the Ham Common Concordium.

Hetherington, whose honest voice sounded like a principle, advocated a stout publicity of its views. James Watson, who shook hands, like a Lancashire man, from the shoulder, with a fervour which you would have cause to remember all the day after, grasped the sinking cause by the hand,<sup>1</sup> and imparted some feeling to it. Mr. Owen, who never doubted its vitality, regarded the moribund movement with complacency, as being in a mere millennial trance. Harriet Martineau brought it gracious news from America of the success of votaries out there, which revived it considerably. John Stuart Mill inspired it with hope, by declaring that there was no reason in political economy why any self-helping movement of the people should die. Mr. Ashurst looked on with his wise and kindly eyes, to see that recovery was not made impossible by new administrative error. But none of the physicians had restored it, if the sagacious men of Rochdale had not discovered the method of feeding it on profits—the most nutritious diet known to social philosophy—which, administered in successive and ever-increasing quantities, gradually restored the circulation of the comatose body, opened its eyes, and set it up alive again, with a capacity of growth which the world never expected to see it display.

It was not until a new generation arose that co-operative enthusiasm was seen again. The Socialists were not cowards in commerce. They could all take care of themselves in competition as well as their neighbours. The police in every town knew them as the best disposed of the artisan class. Employers knew them as the best workmen. Tradesmen knew them as men of business, of disquieting ability. These societarian improvers disliked the conspiracy against their neighbours which competition compelled them to engage in, and they were anxious to find some means of mitigating it.

Of two parties to one undertaking, the smaller number, the capitalists, are able to retain profits sufficient for affluence, while the larger number, the workers, receive a share which, by no parsimony or self-denial, can secure them competence. No insurrection can remedy the evil. No sooner shall the bloody field be still than the same system

<sup>1</sup> I am not sure whether a "cause" has a "hand"; perhaps it has, as it certainly has a heart.



will reproduce the same inequalities. But a better course is open by producers giving security and interest for capital, and dividing the profits earned among themselves, a new distribution of wealth is obtained which accords capital equitable compensation, and secures labour enduring provision. Thus the advocates of the new form of industry by concert tried to combat competition by co-operation.

The *Concordium* had a poet, James Elmslie Duncan, a young enthusiast, who published a *Morning Star* in Whitechapel, where it was much needed. The most remarkable specimen of his genius, I remember, was his epigram on a draped statue of Venus—

"Judge, ye gods, of my surprise,  
A lady naked in her chemise!"

We had poets in those days unknown to Mr. Swinburne or Sir Lewis Morris.

The Ham Common Concordium fell as well as Harmony Hall. The Concordium represented celibacy, mysticism, and long beards. One night, I and Maltus Questell Ryall walked from London to visit it. We found it by observing a tall patriarch's feet projecting through the window. It was a device of the Concordium to ensure ventilation and early rising. By a bastinado of the soles of the prophet with pebbles, we obtained admission in the early morning. Salt, sugar, and tea were alike prohibited; and my wife, who wished salt with the raw cabbage supplied at breakfast, was allowed to have it, on the motion of Mr. Stolzmeier, the agent of Etzler's "Paradise within the Reach of all Men." When the salt was conceded it was concealed in paper under the plate, lest the sight of it should deprave the weaker brethren. On Sundays many visitors came, but the entertainment was slender. On my advice they turned two fields into a strawberry garden, and for a charge of ninepence each, visitors gathered and ate all they could. This prevented them being able to eat much at other meals, for which they paid—and thus the Concordium made money.

## CHAPTER XV

## BEGINNING OF CONSTRUCTIVE CO-OPERATION

None from his fellow starts,  
But playing manly parts,  
And, like true English hearts,  
Stick close together.

DRAYTON.

THOSE who sleep on the banks of the Thames, near Temple Bar, as I did several years, hear in the silence of the night a slow, intermittent contest of clocks. Bow Bells come pealing up the river; St. Dunstan, St. Clement, St. Martin, return the answering clangour. Between the chiming and the striking there suddenly bursts out the sonorous booming of Big Ben from the Parliament clock tower, easily commanding attention in the small Babel of riverside tinklings, and the wakeful hearer can count with certainty the hour from him. To me Rochdale was in one sense the Big Ben of Co-operation, whose sound will long be heard in history over that of many other stores. For half a century Co-operation was audible on the banks of the Humber, the Thames, and the Tyne; but when the great peal finally arose from the banks of the Roche, Lancashire and Yorkshire heard it. Scotland lent it a curious and suspicious ear. Its reverberations travelled to France, Italy, Germany, Russia, and America, and even at the Antipodes settlers in Australia caught its far-travelling tones, and were inspired by it. The men of Rochdale had the very work of Sisyphus before them. The stone of Co-operation had often been rolled up the hill elsewhere, and as often rolled down again. Sometimes it was being dragged up by credit, when, that rope breaking, the reluctant bell slipped into a bog of debt. At length some enthusiasts gave

another turn, when some watchful rascal made away with its profits, which had acted as a wedge, steadying the weight on the hill, and the law being on the side of the thief, let the great boulder roll back. Another set of devotees gave a turn at the great boulder, but having theological questions on hand, they fell into discussion by the way, as to whether Adam was or was not the first man ; when those who said he was refused to push with those who said he was not, and Adam was the cause of another fall in the new Eden, and the co-operative stone found its way once more to the bottom.

At length the Rochdale men took the stone in hand. They invented an interest for everybody in pushing. They stopped up the debt bogs. They mainly established a Wholesale Supply Society, and made the provisions better. They got the law amended, and cleared out the knaves who hung about the till. They planned employment of their profits in productive manufactures, so that the store and workshop might grow. They proclaimed toleration to all opinions—religious and heretical alike—and recognised none. They provided for the education of their members, so that every man knew what to push for and where to place his shoulder, and were the first men who landed the great stone at the top.

When Co-operation recommenced there, Rochdale had no hall which Co-operators could afford to hire. There was, however, a small, square-shaped room, standing in the upper part of Yorkshire Street, opposite to St. James's Church, and looking from the back windows over a low, damp, marshy field. It belonged to Mr. Zach Mellor, the Town Clerk, whose geniality and public spirit were one of the pleasant attributes of official Rochdale. He was, happily, long of opinion that any townsmen, however humble, desirous of improving their condition by honest means, had as much right as any one else to try. He treated—as town clerks should—with civic impartiality all honest townsmen, without regard to their social condition or opinions. Through the personal intervention of Mr. Alderman Livesey, always the advocate of the unfriended, this place was let to the adventurous party of half Chartist and half Socialist who cared for Co-operation. It was in this small Dutch-looking meeting-house that I first spoke on Co-operation, in 1843. I well remember the murky



evening when this occurred. It was the end of one of those damp, drizzling days, when a manufacturing town looks like a penal settlement. I sat watching the rain and mists in the fields as the audience assembled—which was a small one. They came in one by one from the mills, looking as damp and disconsolate as their prospects. I see their dull, hopeless faces now. There were a few with a bustling sort of confidence, as if it would dissolve if they sat still—who moved from bench to bench to say something which did not seem very inspiring to those who heard it. When I came to the desk to speak I felt that neither my subject nor my audience was a very hopeful one. In those days my notes were far beyond the requirements of the occasion; and I generally left my hearers with the impression that I tried to say too much in the time, and that I spoke of many things without leaving certainty in their minds which was the most important. The purport of what I said, as far as it had a purport, was to this effect:—

## I.

Some of you have had experience of Chartist associations, and you have not done much in that way yet. Some of you have taken trouble to create what you call Teetotalers, but temperance depends more upon social condition than exhortation. The hungry will feel low, and the despairing will drink. You have tried to establish a co-operative store here and have failed, and are not hopeful of succeeding now. Still it ought to be tried again, and will not interfere with Chartism; it will give it more means. It will not interfere with temperance; it will furnish more motives to sobriety. Many of you believe Co-operation to be right in principle, and if a thing is right you ought to go on with it. Cobbett tells you the only way to do a difficult thing is to begin and stick at it. Anybody can begin it, but it requires men of a good purpose to stick at it. To collect money from people, who to all appearance have little, is not a hopeful undertaking. Somebody must collect small subscriptions until you have a few pounds. A few rules to act upon, a small room to serve as a sort of shop, and small articles such as you are most likely to sell, as good as you can get them; weigh them out fairly;

then a store is begun. There may be trouble an home; wives prefer going to the old shops, not knowing that credit is catching and debt is the disease they get. A wife will not always have money to buy at the store, and will want to go where she can do so without; you must provide for this, for buying at the store is the only way to make it grow and yield profit. What you save will be your own, and your stock will grow, and you will get things as good as your neighbours, and as cheap as your neighbours. Besides, when you have a shop as large as that of ten shops, you will save the shop-keeping expenses of ten shops, and that will make profit which will be shared by all members. If you want to help the Community in Hampshire, you will then be able to do it. You may be able to set apart some portions of your profits for a news-room and little library where members may spend their evenings, instead of going to the public-house, and save money that way, as well as get information. This is the way stores have been begun. Co-operators have been instructed that all men are different by nature, and come into the world with passions and tendencies they did not give themselves. Ignorance and adversity make the bad worse. Noble self-denial, pettiness, and selfishness will mingle in the same person. Those who understand this are fit for association. Anger at what you do not like, or what you do not expect, can only proceed from ignorance taken by surprise. Tolerance and steadfast goodwill are the chief virtues of association. The rhyme which tells the young speaker to speak slowly, and emphasis and tone will come of themselves, has instruction for you if we change a word to express it—

" Learn to *unite*—all other graces  
Will follow in their proper places."

If you do not regard all creeds as being equally true and equally useful, you will regard them as equally to be respected. In co-operative associations success is always in the power of those who can agree. There the members have no enemies who can harm them but themselves; and when a man has no enemy but himself, he is a fool if he is without a friend. Pope tells you that—

" The devil is wiser now than in the days of yore;  
Now he tempts people by making rich, and not by making poor."

There is certain consolation in that. He has been with you on that business. Your difficulties will lie, not in negotiating with *him*, but in stating your case to your neighbours, that they shall see the good sense of your aims. The main thing you have to avoid is what the Yankees call "tall statements." We are all agreed that competition has a disagreeable edge. But if we should be betrayed into saying that we intend to abolish it, we go beyond our power. But we can mitigate it. When they open a store to sell at market prices, opponents will ask you how you will find out the market price when there are no markets left. There are people who would ask the Apostles how they intended to apply the doctrine of the atonement for sin, when the millennium arrives and all people are perfect. Beware of inquirers who are born before their time, and who spend their lives in putting questions which will not need answering for centuries to come. If workmen increase in numbers the tradesman does not like it. It means more poor rates for him to pay. The gentry do not like it. It means that they would have to cut you down, if riot should follow famine. The only persons whom over-population profits are those who hire labour, because numbers make it cheap. Your condition is so bad that fever is your only friend, which kills without exciting ill-feeling, thins the labour market, and makes wages rise. The children of the poor are less comely than they would be were they better fed, and their minds, for want of instruction, are leaner than their bodies. The little instruction they get is the bastard knowledge given by the precarious, grudging, intermitting, humiliating hand of Charity.<sup>1</sup> Take notice of the changed condition of things since the days of your forefathers. The stout pole-axe and lusty arm availeth not now to the brave. The battle of life is fought now with the tongue and the pen, and the rascal who has learning is more than a match for a hundred honest men without it. Anybody can see that the little money you get is half wasted, because you cannot spend it to advantage. The worst food comes to the poor, which their poverty makes them buy, and their necessity makes them eat. Their stomachs are

<sup>1</sup> There were no School Boards in those days, and the Dissenters prevented there being any, and offered us instead good-natured but shabby, limping, inefficient voluntary education, which never could, and never did educate a quarter of the people.



the waste-baskets of the State. It is their lot to swallow all the adulterations in the market. In these days you all set up in a way as politicians. You go in for the Charter. You allow agitators to address you as the "sovereign people." You want to be electors, and counted as persons of political consequence in the State, and be treated as only gentlemen are now. Now, being a gentleman does not merely mean having money. There are plenty of scoundrels who have that. That which makes the name of gentleman sweet is being a man of good faith and good honour. A gentleman is one who is considerate to others; who never lies, nor fears, nor goes into debt, nor takes advantage of his neighbours; and the poorest man in his humble way can be all this. If you take credit of a shopkeeper you cannot, while you owe him money, buy of another. In most cases you keep him poor by not paying him. The flesh and bones of your children are his property. The very plumpness of your wife, if she has it, belongs to your butcher and your baker. The pulsation of your own heart beats by charity. The clothes on your backs, such as they are, are owned by some tailor. He who lives in debt walks the streets a mere mendicant machine. Thus all debt is self-imposed degradation, and he who incurs it lives in bondage and shabbiness all his days. It is worth while trying Co-operation again to get out of this.

## II.

Is there any avenue of competition through which you could creep? If there be, get into it. In another country you might have a chance; in England you have none. Every bird in the air, every fish in the stream, every animal in the woods, every blade of grass in the fields, every inch of ground has an owner, and there is no help except that of self-help in concert, for any one. If you say you failed through trying to be honest, nobody will believe you; so few run that risk. It is not considered "good business." Be sure of this. Honesty has its liabilities. There are those who tell you of the advantages of truth, but never of its dangers. Truth is dignity, but also a peril; and unless a man knows both sides of it, he will turn into the easy road of prevarication, lying, or silence, when

he meets the danger he has not foreseen, and which had not been foretold to him. When you have a little store, and have reached the point of getting pure provisions, you may find your purchasers will not like them, nor know them when they taste them. Their taste will be required to be educated. They have never eaten the pure food of gentlemen, and will not know the taste of it when you supply it to their lips. The London mechanic does not know the taste of pure coffee. What he takes to be coffee is a decoction of burnt corn and chicory.<sup>1</sup> A friend<sup>2</sup> of mine, knowing this, thought it a pity workmen should not have pure coffee, and opened a coffee-house in the Blackfriars Road, where numerous mechanics and engineers passed in the early morning to their work at the engine shops over the bridge. They were glad to see an early house open so near their work. They tried the coffee a morning or two and went away without showing any marks of satisfaction. They talked about it in their workshops. The opinion arrived at was, "they had never tasted such stuff as that sold at the new place." But before taking decisive measures they took some shopmates with them to taste the suspicious beverage. The unanimous conclusion they came to was that the new coffee-house proprietor intended to poison them, and if he had not adulterated his coffee a morning or two later they would have broken his windows or his head. As it was, the evil repute he had acquired ruined his project; and a notice "To let," which shortly after appeared on the shutters, gave consolation to his ignorant indignant customers.<sup>3</sup>

### III.

What of ambition or interest has industry in this grim, despairing, sloppy<sup>4</sup> hole of a town, where the parish doctor

<sup>1</sup> This was sixty years ago, and Metropolitan coffee has improved.

<sup>2</sup> George Huggett, secretary of the Middlesex Reform Association, well known in Liberal and co-operative movements from 1830 to 1850.

<sup>3</sup> It ought to be explained that imbecility of taste is not confined to workmen. Some years later a West End brewer, well known as a member of Parliament and as a scrupulous man of business, tried the experiment of producing the purest beverages chemistry could prescribe. Soon, however, such notices of dissatisfaction came in from his respectable customers of all classes that he was fain to desist. Many wine merchants make fortunes out of the ignorant palates of their customers.

<sup>4</sup> Rochdale has improved since those days. It has now a Town Hall worth a day's journey to see. The Pioneers' Central Store is a Doge's

and the sexton (who understand each other) are the best known friends the workmen has. Are there not some here who have lost mother or father, or wife, or child, whose presence made the sunshine of the household which now knows them no more? Does not the very world seem deserted now that voice has gone out of it? What would one not give, how far would one not go, to hear it again? Death will not speak, however earnestly we pray to it; but we might get out of living industry some voice of joy that might gladden thousands of hearts to hear. In all England industry has no tone that makes any human creature glad. Listen with the mind's ear to the cry of every manufacturing town. What is there pleasant in it? Co-operation might infuse a more hopeful tone into it.

If you really think that the principle of the thing is wrong, give it up, announce to your neighbours that you have come to a different opinion. This you ought to do as candid men of right spirit, so that any adopting the opinion you have abandoned may understand they must hold it for reasons of their own, and cannot any longer plead such sanction or authority as your belief might lend to their proceedings. If, however, you have convictions that this is a thing that can be put through, put it through. Progress has its witches, as Macbeth had, but the bottom of their old cauldron is pretty well burnt out now. There are still persons who will tell you that others have failed, again and again, and that you pretend to be the wise person, whom the world was waiting for to show it how the thing could be done.<sup>2</sup> But every discoverer who found out what the world was looking for, and

palace compared with any town building which existed when it was erected, and it does not seem to rain so much in Rochdale as in pre-co-operative times. Let the reader see reports made to Parliament of its condition when Sharman Crawford represented it.

<sup>1</sup> Increase of wages, or prospect of competence, there was none in the minds of workmen. Had some said there would be no more reduction of wages, they would have thought the millennium had come. I know it, for I lived long in workshops and never knew a man who had hope of the kind. I never knew the news of self-help was in the world, until I found it in Co-operation.

<sup>2</sup> In a review of Dr. H. Travis's book on "Effectual Reform." "There is," the writer says, "just one little drawback in all these charming pictures; the model village is not built yet, and nobody has ever set about it quite the right way, says our projector, but only let 'me' set about it, and this time you really shall see!"—*Saturday Review*, October 16, 1875.



never met with ; every scientific inventor who has persisted in improving the contrivance, which all who went before him failed to perfect, has been in the same case, and everybody has admitted at last that he was the one wise man the world was waiting for, and that he really knew what nobody else knew, and saw what none who went before him had seen. If you were to take one of those microscopes which are now coming into use, and gather the stem of a rosebud and examine it, you would see a number of small insects, called aphis, travelling along it, in pursuit of some object interesting to its tiny mind. The thing is so small that you can scarcely discern it with the naked eye, but in a microscope you see it put forth its little arms and legs, carefully feeling its way, now stretching out a foot, moving slowly along the side, touching carefully the little projections, moving the limb in the outer air, feeling for a resting-place, never leaving its position till it finds firm ground to stand upon, showing more prudence and patience before it has been alive an hour, than the mass of grown men and women show when they are fifty years of age. The aphis begins to move when it is a minute old, and goes a long way in its one day of life. It does not appear to wait for the applause of surrounding insects. So far as I have observed, it does not ask what its neighbours think, nor pay much attention to what they say after it has once set out. Its wise little mind seems devoted to seeing that in every step forward its foothold is secure. If you have half the prudence and sagacity of these little creatures, who are so young that their lives have to be counted by minutes, and are so small you might carry a million of them in your waistcoat pocket,<sup>1</sup> you might make Co-operation a thing to be talked about in Rochdale. Do not, like crabs, walk sideways to your graves, but do some direct, resolute thing before you die.

I expressed, as I had done elsewhere, my conviction that the right men could do the right thing. My final words were as positive as those used by a great master in the art of expressing wilfulness<sup>2</sup> :—

<sup>1</sup> These prompt little people, born in the morning, marry before breakfast, are grandfathers by the afternoon, and rank as city fathers before the sun goes down.

<sup>2</sup> "Bothwell," by A. C. Swinburne.

"This I cannot tell,  
Whence I do know it ; but that I know it I know,  
And by no casual or conjectural proof ;  
. . . but I know it  
Even as I know I breathe, see, hear, feel, speak,  
And am not dead,"

that I shall see Co-operation succeed here or elsewhere.

The audience were glad it was over ; something was said which implied the impression that a real fanatic had come to Rochdale at last. Other advocates oft visited the town. This address was one of that propagandist time, and will give the reader the arguments of the pre-Rochdale days.<sup>1</sup> For twenty years after that time, whenever I arrived in Rochdale, some store leaders met me at the railway station, and when I asked, "Where I was to go to ?" the answer was, "Thou must come and see store." My portmanteau was taken there, my letters were addressed there, my correspondence was written there, and my host was commonly James Smithies, or Abram Greenwood. My earliest recollection is of having chops and wool at Smithies', for he was a waste dealer, and the woolly odour was all over the house.

The ascendancy of a new movement seems natural in large towns. The larger the town the greater the need of stores, and the less is the chance of success. In a large town there is diversity of life and occupation, greater facilities for diversion, greater difficulties of business publicity, greater mobility of employment among workmen, and less likelihood of a dozen or two men remaining long enough together, pursuing one object year after year, necessary to build up a co-operative store. Glasgow is a town where a prophet would say Co-operation would answer. The thrift, patience, and clanship of the Scottish race seem to supply all the conditions of economy and concert. But though the Scotch are the last people to turn back when they once set out, their prudence leads them to wait and see who will go first. They prefer joining a project when they see it succeeding. There are men in Scotland ready to go out on forlorn hopes, but they are exceptions.

<sup>1</sup> I might add, and traditions of their own town, for some knew what I did not know then, of struggles and stores and old endeavours which had purpose in them. As far back as 1830 a co-operative workshop was started in Rochdale.

It came to pass that the men of Rochdale took the field, and Co-operation recommenced with them. Alderman Livesey aided the new movement by his stout-hearted influence. William Smithies, whose laugh was like a festival, kept it merry in its struggling years. William Cooper, with his Danish face, stood up for it. He had what Canon Kingsley called the "Viking blood" in his veins, and pursued every adversary who appeared in public, with letters in the newspapers, and confronted him on platforms. Abram Greenwood came to its aid with his quiet, purposing face, which the *Spectator*<sup>1</sup> said, "ought to be painted by Rembrandt," possibly because that artist, distinguished for his strong contrasts, would present the white light of Co-operation emerging from the dark shades of competition. And others, whose names are elsewhere recorded,<sup>2</sup> contributed in that town to the great revival.

<sup>1</sup> *London Spectator*.

<sup>2</sup> "History of Co-operation in Rochdale," Parts I. and II.



## CHAPTER XVI

## THE DISCOVERY WHICH RE-CREATED CO-OPERATION

"They gave me advice and counsel in store,  
Praised me and honoured me more and more ;

But, with all their honour and approbation,  
I should, long ago, have died of starvation ;  
Had there not come an excellent man,  
Who bravely to help me along began.

Yet I cannot embrace him—though other folks can :  
For I *myself* am this excellent man !"

HEINE, translated by Leland.

THE men of Rochdale were they who first took the name of Equitable Pioneers. Their object was to establish equity in industry—the idea which best explains the spirit of modern Co-operation. Equity is a better term than Co-operation, as it implies an equitable share of work and profit, which the word Co-operation does not connote. Among the Pioneers was an original, clear-headed, shrewd, plodding thinker, one Charles Howarth, who set himself to devise a plan by which the permanent interest of the members was secured. It was that the profits made by sales should be divided among all members who made purchases, in proportion to the amount they spent, and that the shares of profits coming due to them should remain in the hands of the directors until it amounted to £5, they being registered as shareholders of that amount. This sum they would not have to pay out of their pockets. The store would thus save their shares for them, and they would thus become shareholders without it costing them anything ; so that if all went wrong they lost nothing ; and if they stuck like sensible men to the store, they might save in

the same way other £5, which they could draw out as they pleased. By this scheme the stores ultimately obtained £100 of capital from each twenty members. For this capital they paid an interest of 5 per cent. Of course, before any store could commence, some of the more enterprising promoters must subscribe capital to buy the first stock. This capital in Rochdale was mostly raised by weekly subscriptions of two-pence. In order that there might be as much profit as possible to divide among purchasers, 5 per cent. has become to be regarded as the Co-operative standard rate of interest. The merit of this scheme was that it created capital among men who had none, and allured purchasers to the store by the prospect of a quarterly dividend of profits upon their outlay. Of course those who had the largest families had the largest dealings, and it appeared as though the more they ate the more they saved—a fortunate illusion for the hungry little ones who abounded in Rochdale then.

The device of dividing profits with purchasers was original with Mr. Howarth, although seventeen years in operation at no very great distance from Rochdale. It is singular that it was not until twenty-six years after Mr. Howarth had devised his plan (1844), that any one was aware that it was in operation in 1827. Mr. William Nuttall, in compiling a statistical table for the *Reasoner* in 1870, discovered that an unknown society, at Meltham Mills, near Huddersfield, had existed for forty-three years, having been commenced in 1827, and had divided profits on purchases from the beginning. But it found neither imitators nor propagandists in England.

Mr. Alexander Campbell also claimed to have recommended the same principle in an address which he drew up for the Co-operative Bakers of Glasgow, in 1822: that he fully explained it to the co-operators of Cambuslang, who adopted it in 1831; and that a pamphlet was circulated at the time containing what he said upon the subject. Mr. Campbell further declared that in 1840 he lectured several times in Rochdale, and in 1843-4, when they were organising their society of Equitable Pioneers, they consulted him, and he advised them by letter to adopt the principle of dividing profits on purchases, and, at the same time, assisted in forming the

London Co-operative Society on the same principle. No one has ever produced the pamphlet referred to, or any copy of the rules of any Scotch society, containing the said plan, nor is any mention of it in London extant. Yet it is not unlikely that Mr. Campbell had the idea before the days of Mr. Howarth. It is more likely that the idea of dividing profits with the customer was separately originated. Few persons preserve records of suggestions or rules which attracted small attention in their day. All the Pioneers contemporary with him believed the plan originated with Howarth. The records of the patent offices of all countries show that important inventions have been made again, by persons painfully startled to find that the idea which had cost them years of their lives to work out, had been perfected before they were born. Coincidence of discovery in mechanics, in literature, and in every department of human knowledge, is an axiom among men of experience. From 1822 to 1844 stores limped along and failed to attract growing custom, while dividends were paid only on capital.

It was by taking the public into partnership that the new Co-operation came to grow.<sup>1</sup> Few persons believed stores could be re-established. Customers at the store were scarce and uncertain, it was so small a sum that was likely to arise to be given them, and for a long time it was so little that it proved little attraction. The division of profits among customers, though felt to be a promising step, not being foreseen as a great fortune, was readily agreed to. No one foresaw what a prodigious amount it would one day be. Thirty years later the profits of the Rochdale Store amounted to £50,668, and the profits of the Halifax Store reached £19,820, and those of Leeds £34,510. Had these profits existed in Mr. Howarth's time, and he had proposed to give such amazing sums to mere customers, he would have been deemed mad, and not half a dozen persons would have listened to him outside Bedlam. When twenty members constituted a society, and they made with difficulty ten shillings a year of profit altogether, the proposal to divide it excited no suspicion.

<sup>1</sup> The story told in "Self-Help, or History of the Equitable Pioneers of Rochdale," by the present author, has been retold by translators in many languages.



A clear income of sixpence, as the result of twelve months' active and daily attention to business, excited no jealousy. But had £50,000 been at the disposal of the committee, that would have seemed a large fortune for twelve directors, and no persuasive power on earth would have induced them to divide that among the customers. It would have been said, "What right has the customer to the gains of our trade? What does he do towards creating them? He receives value for his money. He gives no thought, he has no cares, he performs no duties, he takes no trouble, he incurs no risks. If we lose he pays no loss. Why should we enrich him by what we win?" Nobody then could have answered these questions. But when the proposal came in the insidious form of dividing scanty profits, with scarce customers, Mr. Howarth's scheme was adopted, and Co-operation rose from the grave in which short-sighted greed had buried it, and it began the mighty and stalwart career with which we are now conversant. It really seems as though the best steps we take never would be taken, if we knew how wise and right they were.

The time came when substantial profits were made—actually paid over the counter, tangible in the pocket, and certain of recurrence, with increase, at every subsequent quarter-day. The fact was so unexpected that when it was divulged it had all the freshness and suddenness of a revelation to outsiders. The effect of this patient, unforeseen success was diffused about—we might say, in apostolical language—"noised abroad." There needed no advertisement to spread it. When profits—a new name among workpeople—were found to be really made, and known to be really paid to members quarter by quarter, they were copiously heard of. The animated face of the co-operator suggested that his projects were answering with him. He appeared better fed, which was not likely to escape notice among hungry weavers. He was better dressed than formerly, which gave him distinction among his shabby comrades in the mill. The wife no longer had "to sell her petticoat," known to have been done in Rochdale, but had a new gown, and she was not likely to be silent about that; nor was it likely to remain much in concealment. It became a walking and graceful advertisement of Co-operation in every part of the town. Her neighbours were not slow to notice

the change in attire, and their very gossip became a sort of propagandism; and other husbands received hints they might as well belong to the store. The children had cleaner faces, and new pinafores or new jackets, and they propagated the source of their new comforts in their little way, and other little children communicated to their parents what they had seen. Some old hen coops were furbished up and new pullets were observed in them—the cocks seemed to crow of Co-operation. Here and there a pig, which was known to belong to a co-operator, was seen to be fattening, and seemed to squeal in favour of the store. After a while a pianoforte was reported to have been heard in a co-operative cottage, on which it was said the daughters played co-operative airs, the like of which had never been heard in that quarter. There were wild winds, but neither tall trees nor wild birds about Rochdale; but the weavers' songs were not unlike those of the dusky gondoliers of the South, when emancipation first came to them:—

" We pray de Lord he gib us sign  
 Dat one day we be free;  
 De north wind tell it to de pines,  
 De wild duck to de sea.

We tink it when the church bell rings,  
 We dream it in de dream;  
 De rice-bird mean it when he sings,  
 De eagle when he screams."

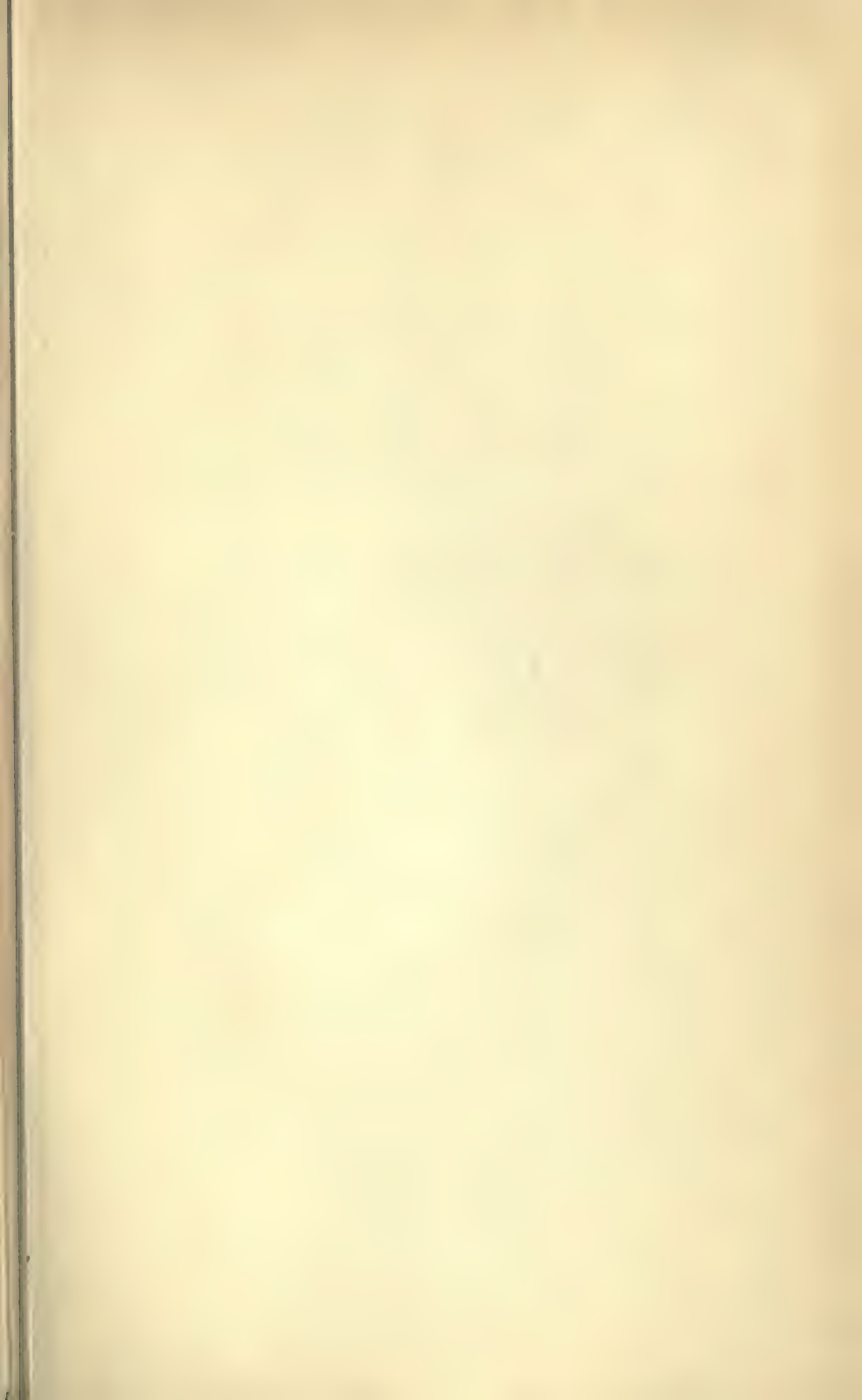
The objects of Nature vary, but the poetry of freedom is everywhere the same. The store was talked about in the mills. It was canvassed in the weaving shed. The farm labourer heard of it in the fields. The coal miner carried the news down the pit. The blacksmith circulated the news at his forge. It was the gossip of the barber's chair—the courage of beards being unknown then. Chartists, reluctant to entertain any question but the "Six Points," took the store into consideration in their societies. In the newspapers letters appeared on the new movement. Preachers who found their pew rents increase were more reticent than in former days about the sin of Co-operation. "Toad Lane" (where the store stood) was the subject of conversation in the public-house. It was discussed in the temperance coffee-shop.

\* Whittier.

The carriers spread news of it in country places, and what was a few years before a matter of derision, became the curious, inquiring, and respectful talk of all those parts. The landlord found his rent paid more regularly, and whispered the fact about. The shopkeeper told his neighbour that customers who had been in his debt for years had paid up their accounts. Members for the Borough became aware that some independent voters were springing up in connection with the store. Politicians began to think there was something in it. Wandering lecturers visiting the town found a better quality of auditors to address, and were invited to houses where tables were better spread than formerly, and were taken to see the store, as one of the new objects of interest in the town, with its news-room, where more London papers could be seen than in any coffee-house in London, and word was carried of what was being done in Rochdale to other towns. News of it got into periodicals in London. Professors and students of social philosophy from abroad came to visit it, and sent news of it home to their country. And thus it spread far and wide that the shrewd men of Rochdale were doing a notable thing in the way of Co-operation. It was all true, and honour will long be accorded them. For it is they, in whatever rank, who act for the right when others are still, who decide when others doubt, who urge forward when others hang back, to whom the glory of great change belongs.

Thus the Rochdale Co-operators found, like Heine, "that his best friend was himself."







THE ORIGINAL TOAD LANE STORE, ROCHDALE.

The Doffers appear on the Opening Day.

[To face p. 283.

## CHAPTER XVII

## CAREER OF THE PIONEER STORE

"But every humour hath its adjunct pleasure,  
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest :  
But these particulars are not my measure,  
All these I better in one general best."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE first we hear of Rochdale in co-operative literature is an announcement in the *Co-operative Miscellany* for July, 1830, which "rejoices to hear that through the medium of the *Weekly Free Press* a co-operative society has been formed in this place, and is going on well. Three public meetings have been held to discuss the principles. They have upwards of sixty members, and are anxious to supply flannels to the various co-operative societies. We understand the prices are from £1 15s. a piece to £5, and that J. Greenhough, Wardleworth Brow, will give every information, if applied to."

The Rochdale flannel weavers were always in trouble for want of work. In June, 1830, they had a great meeting on Cronkey Shaw Moor, which is overlooked by the house once owned by Mr. Bright. At that time there were as many as 7,000 men out of employ. There was an immense concourse of men, women, and children on the moor, although a drizzling rain fell during the speeches—it always does rain in Rochdale when the flannel weavers are out. One speaker, Mr. Hinds, declared "that wages had been so frequently reduced in Rochdale that a flannel weaver could not, by all his exertions and patience, obtain more than from 4s. to 6s. per week." Mr. Renshaw quoted the opinion of "Mr. Robert Owen at Lanark, a gentleman whose travels gave him ample scope for observation, who had declared, at a recent public meeting in London, 'that the



inhabitants of St. Domingo, who were black slaves, seemed to be in a condition greatly to be preferred to that of English operatives.'"<sup>1</sup> Mr. Renshaw said that "when his hearers went home they would find an empty pantry mocking their hungry appetites, the house despoiled of its furniture, an anxious wife with a highway paper, or a King's taxes paper, in her hand, but no money to discharge such claim. God help the poor man when misfortune overtook him ! The rich man in his misfortune could obtain some comfort, but the poor man had nothing to flee to. Cureless despondency was the condition to which he was reduced." It was this year that the first co-operative society was formed in Rochdale. The meeting on Cronkey Shaw Moor was on behalf of the flannel weavers who were then out on strike. The Rochdale men were distinguished among unionists of that time for vigorous behaviour. It appears that during the disturbances in Rochdale, in the year 1831, the constables—"villainous constables," as the record I consult describes them—robbed their box. One would think there was not much in it. However, the men succeeded in bringing the constables to justice, and in convicting them of felony.

It would appear that Rochdale habitually moved by twopences. *The United Trades Co-operative Journal* of Manchester recorded that, notwithstanding the length of time the flannel weavers and spinners had been out, and the slender means of support they had, they had contributed at twopence per man the sum of £30, as their first deposit to the Protection Fund, and that one poor woman, a spinner, who could not raise the twopence agreed upon at their meeting, was so determined not to be behind others in her contributions to what she properly denominated "their own fund," that she actually sold her petticoat to pay her subscriptions.

At the Birmingham Congress of 1832 the Rochdale Society sent a letter urging the utility of "discussing in Congress the establishment of a Co-operative Woollen Manufactory; as the Huddersfield cloth, Halifax and Bradford stuffs, Leicester and Loughborough stockings, and Rochdale flannels required in

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Owen did not distinguish between domestic slaves and field slaves, and dwelt upon social comfort as though it had not occurred to him that freedom was an element of progress.

several respects similar machinery and processes of manufacture, they thought that societies in these towns might unite together and manufacture with advantages not obtainable by separate establishments." At that early period there were co-operators in Rochdale giving their minds to federative projects. Their delegate was Mr. William Harrison, and their secretary, Mr. T. Ladyman, 70, Cheetham Street, Rochdale. Their credentials stated that "the society was first formed in October, 1830, and bore the name of the Rochdale Friendly Society. Its members were fifty-two, the amount of its funds was £108. It employed ten members and their families. It manufactured flannel. It had a library containing thirty-two volumes. It had no school, and never discussed the principles of Labour Exchange, and had two other societies in the neighbourhood." It was deemed a defect in sagacity not to have inquired into the uses of Labour Exchanges as a means of co-operative profit and propagandism. Rochdale from the beginning had a creditable regard for books and education. It also appears—and it is of interest to note it now—that "wholesale" combination was an early Rochdale idea.

From 1830 to 1840 Rochdale went on doing something. One thing recorded is that it converted the Rev. Joseph Marriott to social views—who wrote "Community: a Drama." Another is that in 1838 a "Social Hall" was opened in Yorkshire Street. These facts of Rochdale industrial operations, prior to 1844, when the germ store began, show that this co-operative idea "was in the air." It could hardly be said to be anywhere else until it descended in Toad Lane, and that is where it first touched the earth, took root, and grew.

Like curious and valuable animals which have oft been imported, but never bred from, like rare products of Nature that have frequently been grown without their cultivation becoming general—Co-operation had long existed in various forms; it is only since 1844 that it has been cultivated. Farmers grew wheat before the days of Major Hallett, and practised thin sowing, and made selections of seed—in a way. But it was not until that observing agriculturist traced the laws of growth, and demonstrated the principles of selection, that "pedigree wheat" was possible, and the growing powers of Great Britain were rendered capable of being tripled.

Similar has been the effect of the Pioneer discovery of participation in trade and industry.

Of the "Famous Twenty-eight" old Pioneers, who founded the store by their humble subscriptions of twopence a week, James Smithies was its earliest secretary and counsellor. In his later years he became one of the Town Councillors of the borough—the only one of the Twenty-eight who attained municipal distinction. After a late committee meeting in days of faltering fortunes at the store or the corn mill, he would go out at midnight and call up any one known to have money and sympathy for the cause. And when the disturbed sympathiser was awake and put his head out of the window to learn what was the matter, Smithies would call out, "I am come for thy brass, lad. We mun have it." "All right!" would be the welcome answer. And in one case the bag was fetched with nearly £100 in, and the owner offered to drop it through the window. "No; I'll call in the morning," Smithies replied, with his cheery voice, and then would go home contented that the evil day was averted. In the presence of his vivacity no one could despond, confronted by his buoyant humour no one could be angry. He laughed the store out of despair into prosperity. William Howarth, the "sea lawyer" of Co-operation, is no more. I spoke at the grave of William Cooper, and wrote the inscription for his tomb:—

*In Memory of*

**WILLIAM COOPER**

WHO DIED OCTOBER 31ST, 1868, AGED 46 YEARS.

ONE OF THE ORIGINAL "28" EQUITABLE PIONEERS,

HE HAD A ZEAL EQUAL TO ANY, AND EXCEEDED ALL

IN HIS CEASELESS EXERTIONS, BY PEN AND SPEECH.

HE HAD THE GREATER AND RARER MERIT OF STANDING BY PRINCIPLE

ALWAYS, REGARDLESS ALIKE OF INTERESTS, OF FRIENDSHIPS,

OR OF HIMSELF.

AUTHOR OF THE

"HISTORY OF THE ROCHDALE CO-OPERATIVE CORN MILL SOCIETY."

The following page of facts tells the progress and triumph of the Pioneers reduced to figures:—



Table of the operations of the Society from its commencement in 1844 to the end of 1876 :—

YEAR.	MEMBERS.	FUNDS.	BUSINESS.	PROFITS.
1844	28	£ 28	—	—
1845	74	181	710	22
1846	80	252	1,146	80
1847	110	286	1,924	72
1848	149	397	2,276	117
1849	390	1,193	6,611	561
1850	600	2,289	13,179	886
1851	630	2,785	17,633	990
1852	680	3,471	16,352	1,206
1853	720	5,848	22,700	1,674
1854	900	7,172	33,364	1,763
1855	1,400	11,032	44,902	3,109
1856	1,600	12,920	63,197	3,921
1857	1,850	15,142	79,789	5,470
1858	1,950	18,160	74,680	6,284
1859	2,703	27,060	104,012	10,739
1860	3,450	37,710	153,063	15,906
1861	3,900	42,925	176,206	18,020
1862	3,501	38,465	141,074	17,564
1863	4,013	49,361	158,632	19,671
1864	4,747	62,105	174,937	22,717
1865	5,326	78,778	196,234	25,156
1866	6,246	99,989	240,122	31,931
1867	6,823	128,435	284,919	41,619
1868	6,731	123,233	290,900	37,459
1869	5,809	93,423	236,438	28,542
1870	5,560	80,291	223,021	25,309
1871	6,021	107,500	246,522	29,026
1872	6,444	132,912	267,577	33,640
1873	7,021	160,886	287,212	38,749
1874	7,639	192,814	298,888	40,679
1875	8,415	225,682	305,657	48,212
1876	8,892	254,000	305,190	50,668

These columns of figures are not dull, prosaic, merely statistical, as figures usually are. Every figure glows with a light unknown to chemists, and which has never illumined any town until the Rochdale day. Our forefathers never saw it. They looked with longing and wistful eyes over the dark plains of industry, and no gleam of it appeared. The light they looked for was not a pale, flickering, uncertain light, but one self-created, self-fed, self-sustained, self-growing, and daily growing, not a light of charity or paternal support, but an inextinguishable, independent light. Every numeral in the table glitters with this new light. Every column is a pillar

of fire in the night of industry, guiding other wanderers than Israelites out of the wilderness of helplessness from their Egyptian bondage.

The Toad Lane Store has expanded into nineteen branches, with nineteen news-rooms. Each branch is a far finer building than the original store. The Toad Lane parent store has long been represented by a great Central Store, a commanding pile of buildings which it takes an hour to walk through, situated on the finest site in the town, and overlooks alike the Town Hall and Parish Church. The Central Stores contain a vast library, which has a permanent librarian, Mr. Barnish. The store spends hundreds of pounds in bringing out a new catalogue as the increase of books needs it. Telescopes, field-glasses, microscopes innumerable, exist for the use of members. There are many large towns where gentlemen have no such newsrooms, so many daily papers, weekly papers, magazines, reviews, maps, and costly books of reference, as the working class co-operators of Rochdale possess. They sustain science classes. They own property all over the borough. They have estates covered with streets of houses built for co-operators. They have established a large corn mill which was carried through dreary misadventures by the energy and courage of Mr. Abram Greenwood—misadventures trying every degree of patience and every form of industrial faith. They built a huge spinning mill, and conducted it on profit-sharing principles three years, until outside shareholders perverted it into a joint-stock concern. None of the old pioneers looked back on the Sodom of competition. Had they done so they would have been like Lot's wife, saline on the pillar of history. They set the great example of instituting and maintaining an Educational Fund out of their profits. They sought to set up co-operative workshops—to employ their own members and support them on land, of which they should be the owners, and create a self-supporting community.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## PARLIAMENTARY AID TO CO-OPERATION

"Law is but morality shaped by Act of Parliament."—MR. BERNAL, Chairman of Committees, House of Commons.

THE device of Mr. Howarth had not carried Co-operation far, had it not been for friendly lawyers and Parliament. The legal impediments to industrial economy were serious in 1844. Because "men cannot be made wise by Act of Parliament" is no reason for not making Acts of Parliament wise. "Law should be morality shaped by Act of Parliament." None, however, knew better than Mr. Bernal, that if there was any morality in a Bill at first it often got "shaped" out of it before it became an Act. Nevertheless there is a great deal of living morality in the world which would be very dead had not law given it protection. A law once made is a chain or a finger-post—a barrier or a path. It stops the way or it points the way. If an obstacle it stands like a rock. It comes to be venerated as a pillar of the constitution. The indifferent think it as well as it is—the timid are discouraged by it—the busy are too occupied to give attention to it. At last, some ardent, disinterested persons, denounced for their restlessness, persuade Parliament to remove it, and the nation passes forward.<sup>1</sup>

The Legislature did open new roads of industrial advancement. Working men can become sharers in the profits of a commercial undertaking without incurring unlimited liability,

<sup>1</sup> It was the Rev. William Nassau Molesworth, then incumbent of Spotland, Rochdale, who, discerning in the early efforts of the Pioneers, the prospect of social improvement, first suggested to them the advantages of obtaining the protection of the law for their members.



an advantage so great that the most sanguine despaired of living to see its enactment. This act was mainly owing to William Schofield, M.P. for Birmingham.

In a commercial country like England, one would naturally expect that law would be in favour of trade ; yet so slow was the recognition of industrial liberty that an Act was a long time in force, which enabled a society to sell its products to its own members, but not to others. Thus the Leeds Corn Mill, as Mr. John Holmes related, naturally produced bran as well as flour, could sell its flour to its members, and its bran also, if its members wanted it. But the members, not being rabbits, did not want the bran ; and at one time the Corn Mill Society had as much as £600 worth of bran accumulated in their store-rooms which they were unable to sell to outside buyers. Societies were prohibited holding more than one acre of land, and that not as house or farm land, but only for transacting the business of the society upon. The premises of the Equitable Pioneers occupied land nearly to the extent allowed by the Act. All thoughts of leasing or purchasing land whereon to grow potatoes, corn, or farm produce were prevented by this prohibitory clause. Co-operative farming was difficult. No society could invest money except in savings banks or National Debt funds. No rich society could help a poor society by a loan. No member could save more than £100. The Act prohibited funds being used for educational purposes, and every member was practically made responsible for all the debts of the society—enough to frighten any prudent man away. Besides these impediments, there was no provision compelling any member to give up such property, books, or records that might have been entrusted to him by the society ; so that any knave was endowed with the power, and secured in the means, of breaking up the society when a fit of larceny seized him.

The Friendly Societies Act of 1846 contained what came to be known as the "Frugal Investment Clause," as it permitted the frugal investment of the savings of members for better enabling them to purchase food, firing, clothes, or materials of their trade or calling, or to provide for the education of their children or kindred. In 1850, Mr. Slaney, M.P., obtained a committee upon the savings and investments of the middle and working classes. Important evidence was given by

various persons, including Mr. J. S. Mill, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Bellenden Kerr, Mr. Ludlow, and Mr. Vansittart Neale. Mr. Neale has stated that "Mr. Mill rendered a great and lasting service to co-operative effort by the distinction drawn between the conditions affecting all labour carried on by mankind from the nature of the earth and of man, and the mode in which human institutions may affect the distribution of the products of this labour—two matters commonly confused by political economists, who treat the results of human selfishness, intensified by competition, as if they were unalterable laws of the universe."<sup>1</sup>

The Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852 (15 and 16 Vict., c. 31), introduced by Mr. Slaney, in consequence of the report of the Committee of 1850, authorised the formation of societies by the voluntary subscription of the members, for attaining any purpose (permitted by the laws in force in respect to Friendly Societies, or by that Act), "by carrying on in common any labours, trades, or handicrafts, except the working mines, minerals, or quarries, beyond the limits of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the business of banking." It made all the provisions of the laws relating to Friendly Societies apply to every society constituted under it, except in so far as they were expressly varied by the Act, or any rule expressly authorised or certified by an endorsement on its rules, signed by the Registrar of Friendly Societies, not to be applicable to it. In consequence, Industrial and Provident Societies, while allowed to carry on trade as general dealers, obtained all the advantages given to Friendly Societies, in regard to the vesting of their funds, without conveyance, in their trustees, protection against fraud by their officers; whence the Corn Mill Society of Rochdale dissolved itself in order to be enrolled under the new Act, that it might recover debts due to it. In 1855, the position of Industrial and Provident Societies in this respect was slightly amended; but, unfortunately, in another respect it was altered for the worse by the Frugal Investment Clause, under which Friendly Societies were authorised, among other things, to provide for the

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative News*.

*Education* of their children, being struck out.<sup>1</sup> The Industrial and Provident Societies Act limited itself to authorising the application of profits to "the payment of a dividend on capital not exceeding 5 per cent. per annum [an effective preventive of speculation in the shares of societies], the repayment of loans, the increase of the capital of the society, division among the members or persons employed by them, and such provident purposes as are authorised by the laws relating to Friendly Societies." Thus, indirectly, the effect was that of preventing Industrial and Provident Societies from following the excellent example of Rochdale in regard to the application of their profits, to establish news-rooms, libraries, lectures, or other means of educating themselves. It was an effect of which probably no one in Parliament thought; for, though the Industrial and Provident Societies Act was amended by the 19 and 20 Vict., c. 40, no notice is taken of this restriction. The Act of 1862 authorised the application of profits for any purpose allowed by the Friendly Societies Acts, or otherwise permitted by law. The formation of Educational Funds thus became allowable.<sup>2</sup>

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Dr. John Watts stated at the Social Science Congress, Manchester, 1866, that "in no case which has come under his observation, except in the original one at Rochdale, was there in the constitution of the society any educational provision, and personal inquiry had informed him that this is because the Registrar refuses to allow it. The managers of one of the Manchester stores had no less than four months' correspondence on the subject, and the result of the refusal was the necessity for a quarterly vote for the reading-room, in order to avoid a quarterly quarrel, which, after all, is not always averted." Rochdale entered their educational expenses with the expenses of management, and an indispensable and honest place they held there. There are hundreds of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Tidd Pratt had previously sanctioned rules of societies meditating self-education; as he had by a generous latitude of construction in some earlier cases by which Rochdale had profited from the beginning. Rochdale had been an old offender against the law in prohibiting education.

<sup>2</sup> For these statements I am indebted to Mr. Neale, whom the reader will prefer to follow, Mr. Neale being professionally acquainted with the law.



stores which have never taken advantage of the new law to create an educational fund. And new stores are often opened which have no such provision. These are known as "Dark" stores.

"It must not be forgotten," Mr. Neale has remarked, "how the law of England has affected the working classes, that the privileges given them for the first time in 1862 were also granted in the same year for the first time to the commercial classes. A large part of the evidence before Mr. Slaney's Committee is occupied by the question of the desirableness or mischief of granting limited liability to partners in trade by some method less costly than the one at that time in use—by an Act of Parliament, or a Charter from the Crown, which was shown to have cost the Metropolitan Dwellings Association over £1,000. By the Companies Act of 1862 this was done in the interests of the trading classes, and in the same year the working classes obtained the full measure of legal rights then conferred upon their richer neighbours.

The Act of 1862, by permitting a member to own £200 in the society, doubled the available capital for the extension of operations, and gave new life to societies which, like Halifax, had lain like Rip Van Winkle twenty years without growth or motion. This single improvement in the law awakened it, put activity into it, and it became a great society.

## CHAPTER XIX

## CO-OPERATION IN STORMY DAYS

"To seek the noblest—'tis your only good,  
Now you have seen it ; for that higher vision  
Poisons all meaner choice for evermore."

GEORGE ELIOT.

POLITICAL economists, who are all privately persuaded that Nature would never have been able to carry on until now had they not arisen to give it suggestions, were full of predictions that Co-operation might keep up its health in time of average prosperity, but in days of adversity it would take a low fever, fall into bad ways, suffer from coldness in the extremities, have pains in the "chest," and put the social "faculty" to their wits' end to pull the creature through. Let the cotton famine arrive, and fat Rochdale would become as lean as Lazarus.

In 1861, when the American slave war broke out, and the South armed against the North with a view to establishing a separate slave dominion, the dangerous days set in when cotton would be scarce, mills would stop, wages cease, and eating would be interrupted in hundreds of thousands of households. Would white workmen, who were not quite sure they were not slaves themselves, put up with privations year after year, consume their hard-earned and long-treasured savings, all for the sake of their long-heeled, woolly-headed, black-faced brothers, who probably did not understand freedom—would not know what to do with it when it should come, and who most likely cared nothing for it while the pumpkin was plentiful, and the planter's whip fell on somebody else's back ? Sentiments in favour of freedom might be pretty strong at home—where it concerned ourselves—but it would be drawn very





There are two societies in Oldham, one in King Street, the other at Greenacre Hill. King Street was the larger by about one-sixth. The two societies together had 3,299 members, who did business to the amount of £87,766, and made £7,636 of profit. So that, taken together or singly, Co-operation carried a saucy head in the slave war storm.

Here are a few examples of what were the fortunes of stores elsewhere :—

Name of Store.	No. of Members.	Amount of Business.	Profits Realised.
Liverpool	3,154	£44,355	£3,201
Bury	1,412	47,658	4,689
Bacup	2,296	53,663	6,618

The reader may be assured that no bare bones were found in Mother Hubbard's co-operative cupboard in the cotton famine days. There was no old lady in any competitive district of the working people so bright and plump as she. Bacup workers suffered more from the cotton scarcity than Rochdale. Bacup had scarcely any other branch of trade than cotton. Their store receipts went down nearly one half at the time of the greatest scarcity. The Relief Committee prohibited the recipients going to the store to buy goods with the money given them. They might have bought at the store to more advantage, but probably the Relief Committee considered the shopkeepers more in need of support than the storekeepers. The Liverpool store was little affected by the cotton scarcity. Mr. William Cooper wrote me at the time his estimate of store affairs, which I quote for his amusingly contemptuous appraisal of Manchester. "Liverpool," he said, "has had difficulties of its own making—namely, by giving credit to members—but they have adopted the ready-money system, which will check its sales for a time, but its stability and growth will be all the more certain after. Some of the stores have given to the relief funds. Mossley, Dukinfield, Staleybridge, Ashton, Heywood, Middleton, Rawtenstall, Hyde, have suffered badly, being almost entirely cotton manufacturing towns; yet none of the stores have failed, so that, taken altogether, the co-operative societies in Lancashire are as numerous and as strong now as before the cotton panic set in. Even *Manchester, which is good for nothing now, except to sell cotton*, has created a Manchester and Salford Store, maintained

for five years an average of 1,200 members, and made for them £7,000 of profit."

The reader may be satisfied of the actual and inherent vitality of Co-operation to withstand vicissitudes. Yorkshire and Lancashire live on cotton. When the American slaveholders' rebellion cut off the supply, of course a cotton famine occurred, and people who regarded Co-operation as a *Great Eastern* ship—too unmanageable for industrial navigation—predicted that it would founder in the southern tempest. The scarcity, instead, however, of destroying co-operative societies, brought out in a conspicuous way the soundness of the commercial and moral principles on which they are founded. Mr. Milner Gibson's parliamentary returns at that time show that co-operative societies had increased to 454, and that this number was in full operation in England and Wales in the third year of the scarcity. The amount of business done by 381 of these societies was upwards of £2,600,000. In Lancashire there were 117 societies, in Yorkshire 96. The number of members in 1863, in the 381 societies, was 108,000. The total amount of the assets of these societies was £793,500, while the liabilities were only £229,000. The profits made by the 381 societies (excluding 73 societies which made no returns) were £213,600; and this in the third year of the great cotton scarcity! It may be, therefore, safely concluded that Co-operation established for itself a place among the vital business forces of the country. No one can foretell where the right steps will lead. No moralist foresees the whole of that ethical change which his maxims will generate. No railway inventor ever had any idea of that omnipresent traffic which has grown up. Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden, when they first addressed the people in favour of the repeal of the corn laws, scarcely anticipated that one result would be that they should make the English nation heavier. Every man that you meet in the streets now is stouter, and weighs two stone more than he would have done but for Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. Calculating from our present population, it may be said that these eminent corn-law repealers have increased the weight of the British race by 400,000 tons. So that if our men were precipitated unarmed against battalions of any other nation in the field, they would have increased advantages in bearing them

down by sheer weight. And the humble co-operative weavers of Rochdale, by saving twopences when they had none to spare, and holding together when others separated, until they had made their store pay, set an example which created for the working classes a new future.



## CHAPTER XX

## NATURE OF CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

"It is not co-operation where a few persons join for the purpose of making a profit from cheap purchases, by which only a portion of them benefit. Co-operation is where the whole of the produce is divided. What is wanted is, that the whole of the working class should partake of the profits of labour."—JOHN STUART MILL (Speech at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, London).

EXCITED Labour seems on fire and the Political Economist, albeit a damp creature, seems powerless to extinguish it. Doctrinal streams of "supply and demand" poured upon it, act as petroleum upon flame. Organised capital grinds industry as in the mill of the gods—very small. No protests that capital is his friend reassures the worker. Experience has made him unbelieving.

Sitting at the windows of the Marina, St. Leonards, watching the great ocean raging all alive with tumultuous and ungovernable motion, surging and roaring, I have thought how like it was to the industrial world. There is unfathomable cruelty in murderous waves. Vessels, laden with anxious emigrants, have been, by them, sucked down to death. As far as the eye can stretch the raging ocean covers all space, resembling some insane and boundless beast. Society heaves with the unrest of pitiless competition more devastating than that of the sea. Its remorseless billows wash away the fruits of humble labour. There is no bay or cavern where property lies but is guarded by capitalist or trader, whose knives gleam if the indigent are seen to approach it. The co-operator is not one of them. He can create wealth for himself, and foresees that the rapacity and tumult of greed will be stilled, as the principle of equity in industry comes to prevail.

Co-operation is a very different thing from Co-operation as defined in dictionaries. When several men join in moving a boulder, because one alone could not stir it, it is called Co-operation. In this way, a bundle of sticks bound together present a force of resistance which separately none could pretend to, and in this sense the sticks are as much co-operators as the men. But industrial Co-operation means not only a union for increasing mechanical force, but for obtaining the profit of the transaction, and having it equitably distributed among those who do the work. It is not knowing this difference which causes such confusing chatter in the highest quarters in literature about "Co-operation being as old as the world," and "which has been practised by every people."

Gibbon Wakefield says: "Co-operation takes place when several persons help each other in the same employment, as when two greyhounds running together kill more hares than four greyhounds running separately."<sup>1</sup> This is the nature of the Co-operation chiefly known to political economists. But industrial Co-operation unites not merely to kill the hares, but to eat them. The greyhounds of Wakefield run down the hares for their masters—the new co-operative greyhounds run down the hare for themselves. Industrial Co-operation is not only union for creating, but for dividing profits among all who have helped to make them.

Politeness, as explained by that robust master of definition, Dr. Johnson, consists in giving a preference to others rather than to ourselves. In this sense Co-operation may be defined as the politeness of industry, for it consists in giving the total of its produce equitably to those who create it.

Co-operation was, in Mr. Owen's mind, a paternal arrangement of industry, which could be made more profitable than one in which the employer considered only himself. The self-managing scheme, under which working people create profits and retain them among themselves, Mr. Owen did not propound. His idea was to organise the world—Co-operation attempts the more modest task of organising the provision store and the workshop.

Von Sybel defines the Communists proper as "those who

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Wakefield, note to Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," 1840.

desired to transfer every kind of property to the State."<sup>1</sup> This is Continental Socialism, not English Co-operation. M. De Metz founded a criminal community. He was a man of wealth. Had he been a poor man he had been regarded as a hired agitator. He was as mad as any other social philanthropist, for he believed in the radical goodness of little scoundrels, and that honesty could be cultivated as successfully as fraud, and criminals colonised into an industrial self-supporting community.

A writer who has a cultivated contempt for social innovations, but not intentionally unfair, remarks: "We have had republican societies like Plato's, Fourier's, and Babeuf's; hierarchical and aristocratic like St. Simon's; theocratic like the Essenes; despotic like the Peruvians and Jesuits; Polygamists like the Mormons; material like Mr. Owen's. Some recommended celibacy as the Essenes—some enforce it as the Shakers, some, like the Owenites, relax the marriage tie;<sup>2</sup> some, like the Harmonists, control it; some, like the Moravians, hold it indissoluble; some would divide the wealth of the society equally among all the members; some, as Fourier, unequally. But one great idea pervades them all—community of property more or less complete, and unreserved common labour, for the common good."<sup>3</sup>

When the Irish Land Bill was before the House of Commons, May 16, 1870, Mr. Gathorne Hardy said, "It was not wise to endorse by the sanction of Parliament the principle that the ownership of land was a better thing than the occupation. He protested against the clause as socialistic and communistic. (Hear, hear.)"<sup>4</sup> When a politician does not well know what to say against an adversary's measures, he calls them "socialistic," a term which, to employ Mr. Grant Duff's useful phrase, is a good "working bugbear." In former days, when a clerical disputant met with an unmanageable argument, he said it was "atheistic," and then it was taken as answered. In these days the perplexed politician, seeing no answer to a principle pressed upon him,

<sup>1</sup> Von Sybel, "Hist. French Rev.," vol. I. bk. ii. p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> This is untrue. Mr. Owen's disciples merely advocated equal facility of divorce for poor as for rich.

<sup>3</sup> "Mistaken Aim," pp. 192 and 193, W. R. Greg.

<sup>4</sup> Vide Parliamentary Report.



says it is "communistic." He need give no reasons, the "working bugbear" clears the field of adversaries.

One thing may be taken as true, that the English, whether poor or rich, are not, as a body, thieves. Now and then you find some in both classes who have a predatory talent, which they do not hide in a napkin. Statesmen may sleep in peace. The working men will never steal knowingly, either by crowbar or ballot-box. Tories and Whigs have robbed them; and I think I have seen the Radical hand with marks about it, as though it had been in the people's pocket—doubtless in some moment of patriotic aberration. Nevertheless, the common sense of common men is against speculation.

The *Co-operative Magazine* of 1826 declared happiness as the grand pivot on which the co-operative system turned. "Happiness" was explained as "content and uninjurious enjoyment, that is, enjoyment, not injurious either to one's self or to any other." This, as the Americans say, rather wants "grit." The mind slides over it. A later advocate of some mark, Dr. King, of Brighton, defined Co-operation as "the unknown object which the benevolent part of mankind have always been in search of for the improvement of their fellow-creatures." The object of a definition is to make the thing in question known; and we are not helped by being told it is the "unknown." There is, however, something dimly revealed in what he says of "society," which he derived from the Greek word *sanus*, sound or safe, and *lieo*, to call together, the meaning of which was declared to be—to call together for safety.<sup>1</sup> No doubt there is sense in this. Persons do require to be called together for safety; but what they are to do when so called is not defined.

A writer in the *Co-operative Miscellany* of 1830, signing himself "One of the People," saw his way to a clearer specification of the "unknown" thing. He exclaims: "What is Co-operation? some may inquire." Certainly many did make the inquiry. The answer he gives is this: "Co-operation in its fullest sense is the opposite of Competition; instead of competing and striving with each other to procure the necessities of life, we make common cause, we unite with each other, to procure the same benefits." This is rather

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative Magazine*, January, 1826, p. 7.

a travelling definition, it moves about a good deal and has no fixed destination. It does not disclose how the "common cause" is made. A definition has light in it as soon as it discloses what a thing is not, and names its contrary. We learn now that Co-operation is not competition; but is the "opposite." This writer gives an explanation of the method of procedure—namely, that a co-operative society devotes the profits of the distributive stores to productive industry and the self-employment of the members of the societies. After a lapse of seventy years, the greater and more important part of the plan—the self-employment of members—is but scantily realised. The educated co-operator has always borne it in mind, and it remains as a tradition of Co-operation that production and self-employment go together.

Mr. Thompson, of Cork, the first systematic writer on Industrial Communities, never defined their object otherwise than to say that "workmen should simply alter the direction of their labour. Instead of working for they know not whom, they were to work for each other." Such a definition could only be made intelligible by details, and these Mr. Thompson gave with much elaboration. As a student under Bentham, Mr. Thompson was sure to mean something definite, but the conditions under which men shall "work for each other," the essential feature of Co-operation, he never otherwise brought within the compass of a definition. But community and Co-operation are distinct things.

Practically, the principle of Co-operation grew out of joint-stock shopkeeping. A few persons with means supplied capital for the business, with the understanding that after interest was paid on their capital, the profits should be devoted to the establishment of a community.

The next conception of it was that of prescribing that each purchaser should be a member of the store, and should subscribe a portion of the capital—the profits, after paying interest, were to be kept by the shareholders. At this point Co-operation stopped eighteen years. Nobody was known to have any conception how it could be improved. If everybody was a shareholder, and the shareholders had all the profits, nobody could have more than all, and nobody was left out of the division. There was no enthusiasm under this manage-

ment, and yet there was no apparent fault. In some cases there was great success. Shareholders had 10 and 15 per cent. for their money, which, to a member who could invest £100, was a sensible profit to him. Nevertheless custom fell off, interest in the stores abated, and many were given up. If any solitary cogitator proposed to divide the profits on purchases, it was said, "What is the good of that? If there are profits made, they appear in the interest. You cannot increase them by varying the mode of paying them." Yet all the while this was the very thing that could be done. There lay concealed and unseen the principle of dividing profits on purchases which altered the whole future of Co-operation. We have traced the idea of it to Glasgow in 1822, to Meltham Mills in 1827,<sup>1</sup> to Rochdale in 1844, whence it has spread over the earth. One thing would strike most persons, that giving a profit to customers would increase them. No doubt others saw that under the interest on capital plan, that while the shareholders who could subscribe £100 might get £15, the poorer member who could only put in £1 obtained only 3s., yet the large shareholder who receives the £15 may not have been a purchaser at all, while the poor member, if he had a family, probably contributed £50 of capital to the business, if his purchases amounted to £1 per week, and the 2s. in the £ which on the average can be returned to purchasers now would give him £5 a year, besides his 5 per cent. interest on his capital. Thus it could be shown that the customer contributed more to the profits of the store than the capitalist. The purchaser, therefore, was taken into the partnership. Thus the mere form of distributing profits actually increased them. The interest of the purchaser revived: he became a propagandist. He brought in his neighbour. Business grew, profits augmented, and new vitality was infused into Co-operation. The vague principle that the producer of profit should have the profit, took a defined form, and he got it—and the purchaser was henceforth included in the participation of store gains.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Walter Sanderson, of Galashiels, informs me (1876) that the principle was introduced into that town about the same time (1827) by Mr. William Sanderson (founder of the Building Society there) without any connection with Rochdale. Came it from Cambuslang? Mr. Walter Sanderson gives no details, but he is a responsible correspondent, and his word may be taken as to the fact.



Definitions grow as the horizon of experience expands. They are not inventions, but descriptions of the state of a question. No man sees everything at once. Had Christ foreseen the melancholy controversies over what he meant, which have since saddened the world, he would have written a book himself, and never have trusted the conditions of salvation to the incapable constructions and vague memories of illiterate followers. Foreseeing definitions, guiding Co-operation at successive points, would have been a great advantage, but it had to wait for them.

When it became clear that the purchaser must be taken into partnership as well as the capitalist, it did not occur to any one that Co-operation was not complete so long as the servants of the store were left out. If profits were to be shared by all who contributed to produce them, the servants of the store have their claim.

The conception of the co-operative principle in 1844 had assumed the following form: Co-operation is a scheme of shopkeeping for the working people, where no credit is given or received, where pure articles of just measure are sold at market prices, and the profits accumulated for the purchasers to create like advantage in the workshop.

It was not until twenty-four years later, namely, in 1868, that Rochdale attempted to extend the principle of Co-operation to manufactures. Their method of doing this was to divide profits with the workers. Those who had discovered that the interest of the purchaser was worth buying, were ready to admit that the interest of the workman was also worth buying. Clerks, managers, workmen, whoever in any capacity, high or low, were engaged in promoting the profits, were to be counted in the distribution. Twelve years more elapsed before any current definition of Co-operation contained the following addition: The main principle of Co-operation is that in all new enterprises, whether of trades or manufacture, the profits shall be distributed in equitable proportions among all engaged in creating it.<sup>1</sup>

At the Social Science Congress held in Edinburgh in 1867, I asked Professor Fawcett to take occasion in one of the Sections to define Co-operation as he conceived it, that we might be

<sup>1</sup> "Logic of Co-operation," lecture by the writer.

able to quote his authority in our societies. He did so in words which included labour as well as capital, in the division of profits.

The most comprehensive statement of Co-operation is that given by a master of definitions, and placed at the head of this chapter. It occurred in the first public speech Mr. John Stuart Mill was known to have made. A great Co-operative Tea Party, of members of co-operative societies in London, was held in the Old Crown and Anchor Hall, Strand, then known as the Whittington Club. Being acquainted with Mr. Mill, I solicited him to define the nature of Co-operation as he conceived it, for our guidance, and he did. "It is not Co-operation," he said, "where a few persons join for the purpose of making a profit by which only a portion of them benefit. Co-operation is where the whole of the produce is divided. What is wanted is that the whole working class should partake of the *profits of labour*."

Years elapsed before any official definition was attempted of Co-operation. The Co-operative Congress at Newcastle-on-Tyne (1873) agreed upon a floating definition of a co-operative society, stating that "any society should be regarded as co-operative which divided profits with labour, or trade, or both." Prior to this, I had taken some trouble to show that if the purchaser from a manufacturing society was to be placed on the same footing as the purchaser from a store, a similar extension of business and profits would be likely to arise in the workshop which had accrued at the store; and the cost of advertising and travellers and commissions would be greatly reduced. This led to a more comprehensive definition of the scope of co-operative principle which was thus expressed.

Co-operation is an industrial scheme for delivering the public from the conspiracy of capitalists, traders or manufacturers, who would make the labourer work for the least and the consumer pay the utmost, for whatever he needs of money, machines, or merchandise. Co-operation effects this deliverance by taking the workman and the customer into partnership in every form of business it devises.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Logic of Co-operation." Confusion arises from capital being treated as a recipient of profit. There never will be clearness of view in Co-

All co-operators who have, as the Italians say, "eyes that can see a buffalo in the snow," will see the policy of counting the customer and the worker as an ally. Until this is done, Productive Co-operation will "wriggle" in the markets of competition, as Denner says in "Felix Holt," "like a worm that tries to walk on its tail." Co-operation consists—

1. Concert regulated by honesty, with a view to profit by economy.

2. Equitable distribution of profits among all concerned in creating them, whether by purchases, service in distribution, or by labour, or custom in manufactures.

Dr. Elder, in his work entitled "Topics of the Day," says: "The term Co-operation is restricted to organised combinations designed to relieve them of intermediates in productive industry. Co-operation is partnership in profits equitably distributed in proportion to the severalties of capital,<sup>1</sup> labour skill, and management."

There is an evolution in definitions, as in other things, which it is useful to trace. There is need of this, for principles like—

"Truth can never be confirmed enough,  
Though doubts did ever sleep."

The main idea that should never be absent from the mind of a co-operator is that equity pays, and that the purchaser at the store and the worker in the workshop, mill, or field, or mine, or on the sea, should have a beneficial interest in what he is doing. A principle is a sign by which a movement is known, is a rule of action, and a pledge of policy to be pursued. To be a man of principle is to be known as a person having definite ideas, who sees his way and has chosen it, while others are confused he is clear. While others go round about he goes straight on. When others are in doubt he knows exactly what to do. But the majority are not of this quality. They see a principle for a short time and then lose sight of it. Some one may point out that the new paths lead to a place the very opposite of that they proposed to operation until capital is counted as a trade charge—and when paid, done with. Labour by brain or hand is the sole claimant of profits.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Elder follows the old idea of including "capital" in the "severalties" entitled to profit. Capital is entitled to payment but not profit.



reach. Having no clear discernment of the nature of principle, the unreflecting think one object as good as another, or better, if they see immediate advantage in it.

Co-partnery is not Co-operation. A co-partnery proceeds by hiring money and labour and excluding the labourer from participating in the profit made. English Co-operation never accepted even Louis Blanc's maxim of giving to each according to his wants, and of exacting from each according to his capacity. This points to the reorganisation of society. English Co-operation gives nothing to a man because he wants it, but because he earns it.

Where the interest of the purchaser is not recognised in the store—where the claim of the workman is not recognised in the production—there is no Co-operation; and the assumption of the name is misleading. Distributive Co-operation which takes in the purchaser, and leaves out the servants of the store, is partial Co-operation. Productive Co-operation, which does not recognise the directors, managers, and workmen, is incomplete Co-operation.

When capital divides profits with shareholders only and as such, that is joint-stockism. It does not care for workers, except to use them—nor appeal to their sympathies, nor enlist their zeal, or character, or skill, or good will. And to do the joint-stock system justice it does not ask for them. It bargains for what it can get. It trusts to compelling as much service as answers its purpose. Even if by arrangement all the workmen are shareholders in a joint-stock company, this does not alter the principle. As workmen, because of their work, they get nothing. They are still, as workmen, mere instruments of capital. As shareholders they are more likely to promote the welfare of their company than otherwise; but they do it as a matter of business rather than as a matter of principle. Joint-stock employers often do have regard for their men, and do more in many cases for their men than their men would have the sense to do for themselves. But all this comes in the form of a gift—as a charity—not as a right of labour.

If workmen had capital and held shares in enterprises in which they were engaged in labour, they would be merely a capitalist class, studying how to get the most by the employ-

ment of others, how early to desert work themselves, and subsist upon the earnings of those to whom labour was still an obligation. What Co-operation proposes is that workmen should combine to manufacture and arrange to distribute profits among themselves, and among all of their own order whom they employ. By establishing the right of labour, as labour, to be counted as capital, by dividing profits on labour, they would give it dignity; they would appeal to the skill, goodwill, to the utmost capacity and honest pride of a workman, and have a real claim upon him in these respects.

It is quite conceivable that many working men will yet, for a long time to come, prefer the present independent relation of master and servant. Many a man who has the fire of the savage in him, and whom civilisation has not taught how much more happiness can be commanded by considering the welfare of others than by considering only himself, prefers working on war terms, unfettered by any obligation. He has no sympathy to give, and he does not care that none is offered him. He would not reciprocate it if it were. He dislikes being bound, even by interest. Any binding is objectionable to him. Hate, malevolence, spite, and conspiracy are not evils to him. He rather likes them. His mode of action may bring evils and privation upon others; but he is not tender on these points; and if he be a man of ability in his trade he can get through life pretty well while health lasts, and enjoy insolent days.

The imputations heaped upon capital arise from workmen always seeing its claws when it has uncontrolled mastery. No animal known to Dr. Darwin has so curvilinear a back or nails so long and sharp as the capitalist cat. As the master of industry—unless in generous hands—capital bites very sharp. As the servant of industry it is the friend of the workman. Nobody decries capital in itself, except men with oil in their brains, which causes all their ideas to slip about, and never rest upon any fact. Capital is an assistant creator. It is selfish when it takes all the profits of the joint enterprise of money and labour. It is capable of buying up land and abruptly turning people off it—it is capable of buying up markets and making the people pay what it pleases; it is capable of shutting the doors of labour until men are starved into working on its own terms. Capital is like fire, or steam,

or electricity, a good friend but a bad master. Capital as a servant is a helpmate and co-operator. To limit his mastership he must be subjected to definite interest. This was the earliest device of co-operators, but its light has grown dim in many minds, and in many undertakings has never shone at all.

In Distributive Co-operation the interest of capital is counted as a trade charge to be paid before profits are counted; and in Productive Co-operation the same rule should be followed.

In England we do not apply the term co-operative to business in reference to the source of profit, but to the distribution of the profit. In a store, profit is not divided upon the amount of capital invested, but upon the amount of purchases by members. The purchasers are in the place of workers—they cause the profits and get them, while capital, a neutral agent, is paid a fixed interest and no more.

On the other hand, Productive Co-operation is an association of workers who unite to obtain profit by their labour, and who divide profit upon labour, just as in a store they are divided upon purchases. Mr. Roswell Fisher, of Montreal, presents the advantage of the principle of dividing profits upon labour in a clear form. It is this: The workmen should subscribe their own capital, or hire it at the rate at which it can be had in the money market, according to the risk of the business in which it is to be embarked: then assign to managers, foremen, and workmen the salaries they can command. Out of the gross earnings, wages, the hire of labour; the hire of capital; all materials, wear and tear, and expenses of all kinds are defrayed. The surplus is profit, and that profit is divided upon the labour according to its value. Thus, if the profits were 5 per cent., and the chief director has £10 a week, and a skilful workman £2, the director would take £50 of the profit, and the workmen £5. The capital, whether owned by the workmen or others, would have received its agreed payment, and would have no claim upon the profits of labour.

The ceaseless conflicts between capital and labour arise from capital not being content with the payment of its hire. When it has received interest according to its risk, and according to agreement, there should be an end of its claims. Labour then would regard capital as an agent which it must pay; but when



it has earned the wages of capital and paid them, labour ought to be done with capital. Capital can do nothing, can earn nothing, of itself; but employed by labour, the brains, and industry of workmen can make it productive. Capital has no brains, and makes no exertions. When capital has its interest its claims end. It is capital taking the profits earned by labour that produces conflict. In Co-operation labour does not consider profit made until capital is required for its aid.

A distinguished French co-operative writer, M. Réclus, says, "Give the capitalist only one-third of the surplus profits, and the worker two-thirds." Mr. Hill replies, "In countries like India, wherein capital is comparatively scarce, it can and will command high terms in any agreement it may make with labour; whilst in North America, where *labour* is scarce, labour can and will command comparatively high terms in its agreement with capital. It would seem a monstrous violation of abstract principle that, whilst in order to earn fifty guineas a low-class agricultural labourer must work hard for two whole years, Jenny Lind should obtain such a sum for singing one single song! But so it is; and why—but that mere labourers are plentiful, whilst of Jenny Linds there is but one." <sup>1</sup> A Jenny Lind rate of interest must be given for it if it cannot be had without, but having got that it should not come up a second or third time for more.

Capitalists hired labour, paid its market price, and took all profits. Co-operative labour proposes to hire capital, pay it its market price, and itself take all profit. It is more reasonable and better for society and progress that men should own capital than that capital should own men.

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operator*, September, 1865.

## CHAPTER XXI

## DISTRIBUTION.—THE CO-OPERATIVE STORE

"Co-operation is the true goal of our industrial progress, the appointed means of rescuing the Labouring Class from dependence, dissipation, prodigality, and need, and establishing it on a basis of forecast, calculation, sobriety, and thrift, conducive at once to its material comfort, its intellectual culture, and moral elevation."—HORACE GREELEY, Founder of the *New York Tribune*.

SHOPS in most countries are confined to the sale of one, or a very few articles. Among artificers in metals work-rooms are called "workshops." In towns where articles, and provisions in portable quantities, are sold, they are called simply "shops." Where great varieties of goods are collected together for sale it is called a "Store." This American name was very early applied to co-operative shops, where articles of many kinds, groceries, garments, feet-gear, and goods of household use, were stored for sale. This is called Distributive Co-operation. The manufacture of articles for sale is called Productive Co-operation.

The earliest, humblest, and quaintest store founded in England, so far as my researches have gone, is that set up by the sagacious Bishop Barrington, one of George the Third's Bishops, who held the see of Durham at the end of the seventeenth century. At first sight it is not a recommendation to posterity to have been one of the Georgian Bishops. What did Walter Savage Landor say of the Georges? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thackeray had devoted four lectures to the four Georges when Landor put their history into six lines and sent them to Mr. H. J. Slack, who was then editor of the *Atlas* newspaper, in which they first appeared:—

"George the First was always reckoned  
Vile—viler George the Second,  
And what mortal ever heard  
Any good of George the Third?  
And when from earth the Fourth descended,  
God be praised the Georges ended."

However, Bishop Barrington was a great favourite in Durham, and had fine qualities and gracious ways. When my inquiry for co-operative facts appeared in the *New York Tribune*, a correspondent, at the foot of the Alleghanies, sent me pages of an old magazine, which he had carried from England long years ago, with his household goods, containing, in large type, an "account of a village shop at Mongewell, in the county of Oxford, communicated by the Bishop of Durham." This humble provision store, with its scanty stock, its tottering pauper storekeeper, with his shilling a week salary, is a picture of the humblest beginning any great movement ever had. No doubt the Bishop was a good secular preacher. He certainly was a man of business, and showed perfect knowledge of the working of a store, and would make no bad manager of one in these days. He describes the condition of poor people in those times: their ignorance, their helplessness, their humility of expectation, and the economical and moral advantages of a co-operative store, as completely and briefly as they ever were described. I enrich these pages with the Bishop's words:—

"In the year 1794, a village shop was opened at Mongewell, in Oxfordshire, for the benefit of the poor of that and three small adjoining parishes. A quantity of such articles of consumption as they use was procured from the wholesale dealers as bacon, cheese, candles, soap, and salt, to be sold at prime cost, and for ready money. The bacon and cheese, being purchased in Gloucestershire, had the charge of carriage. This plan was adopted under the apparent inconvenience of not having a more proper person to sell the several commodities, than an infirm old man, unable to read or write. He received the articles that were wanted for the week; and it has appeared by his receipts at the close of it, that he has been correct. Since the commencement to the present time, there has been no reason to regret his want of scholarship: a proof how very easy it must be to procure, in every village, a person equal to the task. As he has parish pay, and his house-rent is discharged, he is perfectly contented with his salary of *one shilling per week*, having also the common benefit of the shop.

"As the prices of the shop articles have varied much during the past year (1796), it will be easy to judge of the advantage by taking them at the average, and the account will be more



simple. The price of the sale has been in the proportion stated, against the prices of the shops in the neighbourhood.

"The rate of bacon purchased, has been eightpence halfpenny per pound; the carriage rather more than a farthing. It was sold for ninepence farthing; the advantage to the poor was twopence three-farthings per pound. Cheese cost fourpence three-farthings; carriage more than a farthing; sold for sixpence: advantage to the poor, one penny per pound. Soap, candles, and salt, sold at prime cost: the advantage on these articles to the poor was one pound eleven shillings.

"There is a loss on the soap from cutting and keeping: to prevent which it is laid in by small quantities. Buying the salt by the bushel, almost covers the loss sustained from selling it by the pound.

"The quantity of bacon sold during the year was one hundred and sixty-eight score. Cheese twenty-eight hundred weight.

Account of payments in 1796.

Candles, soap, and salt	...	...	...	£31	1	6
Bacon	...	...	...	120	0	0
Cheese	...	...	...	62	9	5
Carriage	...	...	...	7	11	3
Salary	...	...	...	2	12	0

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£223 14 2

"The receipts corresponded, except by fifteen shillings: which arose from the poor of Mongewell having been allowed their soap and candles a penny per pound under prime cost. The saving to the poor was—

On bacon	...	...	...	£34	16	8
On cheese	...	...	...	11	13	4
On candles, &c.	...	...	...	1	11	0

---

£48 1 0

"Hence it appears that the addition to the prime cost of bacon and cheese, is equal to the loss on the hocks and the

cutting. Every other part of the fitch being sold at the same price.

"Since the commencement of the present year (1797) rice and coarse sugar have been introduced into the Mongewell shop, with much benefit ; particularly the former (rice).

"From the above statement it is seen that, taking all the articles together sold at the Mongewell shop, there was a saving to the poor of 21 per cent. in the supply of several of the most important articles of life. Many, in every parish, would lend their assistance to carry this plan into execution, if it were known that the *rates* would be lowered at the same time that the poor were benefited.

"From the adoption of this plan, the poor will have good weight, and articles of the best quality ; which, without imputing dishonesty to the country shopkeeper, will not always be the case at a common shop. Where there is no power of rejection, it is not probable that much regard would be paid to these considerations by the seller.

"The comforts of the poor may thus be promoted, by bringing within their reach the articles of life which they chiefly want, of the best quality, and at the cheapest rate. Their morals will also be improved by the removal of an inducement to frequent the alehouse. The parish rates will be lessened, even if the articles were sold without profit ; for the labourer will be enabled to purchase clothing for his family without other assistance.

"Another benefit of this measure is the preventing the poor running in debt. The credit given to them adds much to the sufferings they undergo from their situation. As the poor find that they can procure necessities for their families by credit, they feel less scrupulous in spending part of their weekly wages at the alehouse. Hence the earnings of the following week are diminished, by having mis-spent their time as well as their money. There are but few parishes which do not confirm the truth of these observations ; and which have not been called upon to redeem such goods of the poor, as the shopkeeper had at length seized, to cover himself from loss, and when he had no hopes of security from their labour."

It is impossible not to feel respect for the poor "infirm old" storekeeper—although "he could neither read nor write," his

"receipts were always correct," and if he wanted "scholarship" he did not want honesty. The reader will agree this is a very minute and remarkable account of the Village Shop. The grocers of the diocese must have been as angry at the promoters of the innovatory store as they have been since. There has been no Co-operative Bishop who has had more discernment of the subject, has taken such trouble to establish a store, or given so useful an account of it, as the Bishop of Durham.

The co-operative store which Mr. Owen established at New Lanark was very rudimentary, precisely such as we have in London under the name of Civil Service Stores. Knowing that the workpeople—as is the case everywhere with the poor—had to pay really high prices for very inferior articles, and could never depend upon their purity or just measure, he fitted up a store at New Lanark with the best provisions that could be obtained and sold them to his workpeople at cost price, with only such a slight addition as to pay the expenses of collecting and serving the goods. Some households (managers probably) with large families are said to have saved as much as ten shillings a week through buying at Mr. Owen's store. After a time he added to the cost and distributing price a sum for educational purposes, and thus he laid the foundation of that wise plan for applying a portion of profit to the education of the members and their families. Mr. Owen afterwards appropriated a portion of his manufacturing profits to the improvement of the dwellings of the workpeople, and the instruction of their families. On one occasion, when his partners came down from London to inspect his proceedings, they found so many things to approve and so much profit made, they presented him with a piece of plate. Mr. Owen had incurred an expenditure of £5,000 for new schools. They had no belief that intelligence would pay. Mr. Owen was entirely of the opposite conviction, and though he did not make his workpeople sharers in the profits of the factory, in the form of paying them dividends, he made them participators in the profits by the ample provision he made for their education, their profit, their pleasure, and their health.

"Before completing this history I visited New Lanark, to look upon the mills erected on the falls of the Clyde by Sir Richard Arkwright and David Dale, now more than one



hundred years ago, and made famous by Robert Owen. Though I had often heard him speak of what he had done there, and had examined several accounts given by his son, the Honourable Robert Dale Owen, I never conceived the high esteem for him which I felt when I saw with my own eyes what he had accomplished. I thought the schoolrooms, of which so much was said, were some unused rooms in the mill and were entered by a hole in the wall—being, as I knew, commodious, but, as I supposed, mean and tame and cheap in construction. Whereas I found the schoolhouse a separate structure, built of stone, vast and stately with handsome portico supported by four stone pillars. There are three schoolrooms on the ground floor, which will each hold 600 or 700 people. Above are two lecture halls, lofty and well lighted; one would hold 800; another, with a gallery all round it, would hold 2,000 people. The reading-desk (and the stairs to it) from which Mr. Owen first announced his celebrated scheme for the reconstruction of the world; the handsome triangular lights, still bright, which used to hang from the ceiling, and the quaint apparatus for the magic lantern, are there still; and in another building, built by him for a dancing-room for the young people, are stored numerous blackboards, on which are painted musical scales and countless objects in various departments of nature. There are also very many canvas diagrams, some of immense dimensions, which are well and brightly painted, as was Mr. Owen's wont, by the best artists he could procure. They must have cost him a considerable sum of money. Time, neglect, and 'decay's effacing fingers' have rendered them but a wreck of what they were, but they are still perfect enough to show the state in which Object Teaching was when it was first invented. Mr. Owen knew Fellenberg and Froebel, and carried out their ideas with the opulent ardour with which he conceived them, years before they found opportunity of carrying them out themselves. My purpose in mentioning these things is that the South Kensington or other Museum may hear of them. Most of the diagrams are capable of being restored, and are numerous enough to make an exhibition in themselves, and would be of great interest to the new generation of teachers in any town in which they could be seen. The Messrs.

Walkers, who now own the mills, and who have preserved this famous collection of school furniture, may be willing to transfer them to some public museum. It is now (1878) nearly sixty years since they were first used, and their existence has long been unknown to teachers. Dr. Lyon Playfair is in America, or I would ask him to interest himself about them. Probably Professor Hodgson, of Edinburgh University, would—he being near them, and being one who cares for the traditions of education. It matters little in what museum the relics in question may be placed, provided they are preserved from loss.”<sup>1</sup>

On kicking away the layers of mortar which had fallen from the ceiling of the great lecture hall, to make sure that the floor was safe to tread upon, I found underneath diagrams which had been walked over until they were in tatters. It was thus I was led to inquire whether any others existed. Mr. Bright had just then asked whether the ruins of the mills of Manchester would one day mark the extinction of commerce, as the ruins of Tantallon Castle marked the extinction of the feudal system. I thought as I walked through the deserted lecture hall of New Lanark, that I was treading amid the ruins of education.

So late as 1863 a store existed in London exactly in the condition to which they had degenerated when their social purpose had ceased, conducted merely as a joint-stock shop. At that time Mr. Ebenezer Edger joined with me in endeavouring to organise a union of the scattered Co-operative Societies of the Metropolis. Our circular was sent to one whose address was 30, Ion Square, Hackney Road, N. Mr. Chas. Clarke, the Manager, sent the following reply: “Our association cannot be classed exactly amongst Co-operative Stores, so we have no interest to publish our affairs, as we won’t have *anybody* in with us. As for Directors *we are very particular*. I am sole Manager of all, and intend to keep so. Any who join us can make a small fortune, but must obey my instructions, but we are independent of any who wish to join, we keep in working order with our present number.”

Mr. Clarke did not favour us with the method whereby

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the *Times*, by G. J. Holyoake, November 13, 1877, inserted under the head of “Educational Archæology.”

"each member joining his store could make a small fortune." Had he made it known and it proved satisfactory, so valuable a manager would never have been left to waste his abilities in Ion Square.

Dr. Angus Smith has stated that London has in it nineteen climates. Every town has several different climates and several entirely different classes of people—quite distinct races, if regard be had to their minds and ways of living. No one supposed that the men of Rochdale would carry Co-operation forward as they did. The men of Liverpool knew more about it. The men of Birmingham had more of its inspiration and traditions, and more advocates and leaders of Co-operation in it than any other town. Manchester had more experience of it. Leeds had more energy among its men. Sheffield had more spirit and individual determination. Scotland had seen its foundations laid in their midst, and two communities had been started among them. Yet Rochdale, from whom no one expected anything, eventually did everything. In England there is more business enterprise than in Germany, yet Schulze-Delitsch has overrun the land with Credit Banks for lending money to persons who would put it into trade or commerce, while in this country it has never entered into the heart of any human being, unless it be Dr. Hardwicke, to imagine that any person might profit in like manner.<sup>1</sup>

The difference between German and English Co-operation is this: the German co-operator sets up Credit Banks, the English co-operator sets up Stores. The Germans lend money, the Englishman makes it. The way in which it was done was explained by Dr. Watts. "A well-conducted co-operative store can offer a workman  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. rise on his wages, and that without a strike or struggle. I had before me in March of 1861 returns from sixty-five co-operative stores, and I found their average dividends showed a profit of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., which is one shilling and sixpence in the pound. My own pass-book shows that I paid on November 3rd (1860) £1 to become a member. I have paid nothing since, and I am now (1872) credited with £3 16s. 6d., nearly 300 per cent. on my capital in a single year. Of course that arises from my

<sup>1</sup> Since then Mr. Henry W. Wolff has introduced the system into this country and published an important book on "Credit Banks."



purchases having been large in proportion to my investment." <sup>1</sup>

Dr. Watts pointed out how singular a thing it is that "the poorest people have the most servants. The poor man has to pay the importer, the wholesale dealer, the retail dealer, and often the huckster. These are all his servants; they all do work for him and they have to be paid; so the very poorest man who wants to become richer has only to drop his servants."

A modern co-operative store generally obtains success by five things:—

1. Intelligent discontent at being compelled to buy bad articles at a high price.

2. By opening a small, low-rented clean shop, and selling good goods at honest measure and at average prices.

3. By increasing the cheapness of goods bought by concert of custom. The more money can be taken into the market, the further it goes in purchasing; the large custom diminishes the cost of management.

4. By buying from the Wholesale Society, stock can be obtained from the best markets at the lowest rates and of good quality. It is by *continuity of quality* that the prosperity of a store is established.

5. By capitalising the first profits carried to the credit of the members until they amount to £5. By this means the first hundred members supply a capital of £500.

Leicester, which King Lear founded before his daughters were disagreeable, and which had a Mint in the year 978, did not at first supply its store with sufficient capital, the members subscribing but £1 or £2 each. The result was that the store was pale in the face through financial inanition. If the society had a physician it would have been ordered an appropriate increase of financial diet immediately. Pale-faced stores are starved stores; and when young have rickets.

The store must be fed with capital, the weekly official paper of the movement must be fed with subscribers, the heads of the members must be filled with ideas. If a store have not sufficient capital for its business it has the ghostly look of a disembodied thing. Wise members take in the Journal which represents the cause of the stores and the workshop.

<sup>1</sup> Lecture, Mechanics' Institution, Manchester, November, 1861.

In commencing a store, the first thing to do is for two or three persons to call a meeting of those likely to join. In this world two or three persons always do everything. Certainly, a few persons are at the bottom of every improvement, initiating it and urging it on. Capital for the store is usually provided by each person putting down his or her name for as much as each may be able—towards payment of five shares of one pound each. If the store is to be a small one, a hundred members subscribing a one or two-pound share each will enable a beginning to be made. It is safest for the members to subscribe their own capital. Interest has to be paid upon borrowed money often before any profits are made. Sometimes the lenders become alarmed, and call their loans in suddenly, which commonly breaks up the store, or directors have to become guarantees for its payment, and then the control of the store necessarily falls into their hands. By commencing upon the system of the intending co-operators subscribing their own capital, a larger number of members are obtained, and all have personal interest in the store, and give it their custom.

A secretary should be appointed, and a treasurer; and two or three nimble-footed, good-tempered, willing fellows named as collectors, who shall go round to the members, and bring into the treasury their subscriptions. Some place should be chosen where members can pay them. Some will have the right feeling, good sense, and punctuality to go, or send, and pay their money unasked. But these are always few. Many will think they do quite enough to subscribe, without being at trouble to do it. Considering, as Dr. Isaac Watts says, that "the mind is the standard of the man," it is astonishing how few people "know their own minds," and how many have to be fined to bring it to their recollection that they have "minds." Numbers of well-meaning working men can only pay at a certain time in each week, and if the collector does not catch them then, they cannot pay that week at all, for their money is gone. The collectors of store funds require to be men of practical sense, capable of infinite trouble and patience. Ungrudging praise is due to whoever undertakes this work. They are the real founders of the store.

At first, wholesale dealers were shy of co-operators, and would not sell to them, and the societies bought at a dis-

advantage in consequence. Before long friendly dealers arose, who treated them on fair terms. Mr. Woodin, of London, Mr. J. McKenzie, of Glasgow, tea merchants, Messrs. Constable and Henderson, of London, wholesale sugar dealers, Messrs. Ward & Co., of Leeds, provision merchants, were examples of tradesmen of the kind described. A wholesale agency now exists in Manchester, which keeps buyers who understand what to buy and where to buy it. This Wholesale Society<sup>1</sup> enables a young society to offer at once to its customers goods of quality, so that the poorest residents of Shoreditch or Bethnal Green could buy food as pure and rich as though they were purchasers at Fortnum and Mason's in Piccadilly—in fact, obtain West End provisions at East End prices. Dishonesty among co-operators is very rare, and it is sufficiently provided against by guarantees. When servants are appointed, they should never be distrusted on rumour, or conjecture, or hearsay, or suspicion. Nothing but the clearly ascertained fact of wrong-doing should be acted upon as against them. If every society took as much trouble to find out whether it has good servants as it does to find out whether it has bad ones, many societies would flourish that now fail. As Mr. J. S. Mill said to the London co-operators, whom he addressed at the Whittington Club, "Next to the misfortune to a society of having bad servants, is to have good servants and not to know it." Talleyrand used to say to his agents, "Beware of zeal," which leads men into indiscretions. But if earnestness without zeal can be got, success is certain. A true co-operator has three qualities—good sense, good temper, and good will. Most people have one or the other quality, but a true co-operator has all three: "good sense," to dispose him to make the most of his means; "good temper," to enable him to associate with others; "good will," to incline him to serve others, and be at trouble to serve them, and to go on serving them, whether they are grateful or not in return, caring only to know that he does good, and finding it a sufficient reward to see that others are benefited through his unsolicited, unthanked, unrequited exertions. Sooner or later—generally later—they will be appreciated.

<sup>1</sup> There is a branch of the Wholesale at 99, Leman Street, London; and one in Newcastle-on-Tyne.



In a properly-constituted store, the funds are disposed of quarterly or half-yearly in six ways. (1) Expenses of management; (2) interest due on loans; (3) 10 per cent. of the value of the fixed stock, set apart to cover wear and tear; <sup>1</sup> (4) dividends on subscribed capital of the members; (5) 2½ per cent. of the remaining profit to be applied to educational purposes; (6) the residue, and that only, is then divided among all the persons employed and members of the store in proportion to the amount of their wages and of their purchases, varying from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. in the pound.

Co-operators have known how to keep accounts. Dr. Watts, being the manager of an insurance society which guarantees the integrity of persons in responsible situations, bears this testimony: "I have had to do with a considerable number of them professionally, having had to guarantee the honesty of the managers, which has enabled me, when I see any fault in the accounts, to insist upon it being rectified; and I can say that the balance-sheets of co-operative societies, as a rule, would be a credit to any public accountant. There is no single thing hidden; you may trace the whole of the society's operations through the figures of the quarterly report." Co-operators also manage their affairs very peacefully, for though I, the writer, have been appointed arbitrator to many societies, I have never been called upon to adjudicate upon any difference, save twice in thirty years. Other arbitrators have also reason to complain of want of business.

It is not pretended that Co-operation is a special solvent of scoundrelism, only that it diminishes the temptations to it. The dealer, the order-getter, and travelling agent of commercial firms are often the corruptors of store-keepers and store-managers. Some few years ago a manufacturer of a class of articles in general demand in stores, endeavoured to do business with them. Being a man of honesty himself, his agents made no offer of commission or any gift to store-keepers, and he soon found that he could not do business with them worthy

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Willis Knowles, an experienced co-operator, says that the store at Hyde finds it most profitable to extinguish the fixed stock charge as early as possible—making the fund set aside for depreciations large for this purpose; for whatever value is put upon unredeemed and fixed stock has to receive interest which is equivalent to a rent charge. This being cleared off allows a larger dividend to be paid to members.

of his attention. He succeeded for a time, but ere long orders fell off, or complaints were made without reason. It was within my knowledge that the goods offered in this case were really pure. The manufacturer, for there were not many competitors in his business, knew that orders were given by the stores to the firms that could not supply goods equal to his in quality and cheapness. At the same time I knew of cases in another part of the country where Co-operation was better understood which was creditable to store-keepers. There was a dealer in London known to me who would corrupt any one he could for trade, and who did not care who knew it. His doctrine was the common one that if he did not do it some rival would—an argument by which any knave might justify himself in pocket-picking. This villainous logician was a man of respectability, punctual in the payment of pew rents. He showed me a letter he had had from Jay Giggles, a well-known store-keeper in the North. Any one would think the name fictitious who did not know what extraordinary names co-operators have.<sup>1</sup> Giggles had given an order to the house in question, and for reasons of his own, sent afterwards this note:—

“SIR,—Perhaps it is right to inform you that I do not ask, nor expect, nor take any gift from your traveller, to whom I have given orders; I therefore expect to have good goods sent me. I may not find it out very soon if they are not what I am promised by your traveller, but I shall before long make the discovery, or somebody will for me, and then you will have no more orders. I do not pretend to be such a very virtuous person; but my directors give me a good salary that I may not be tempted to seek gifts. I am therefore bound to do the best I can for them. If I do not, I shall be found out, and I shall lose my place.

“JAY GIGGLES.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Owen's first employer at Stamford was named McGuffog. A manufacturer with whom he had early relations, was a Mr. Oldknow.

<sup>2</sup> The man's name was Giggles. His mother being an admirer of the Rev. Mr. Jay, of Bath, whom she had heard in her time, would have her son named Jay—rather an absurd union. Any one who passes to-day near the Hyde Park entrance in Brompton Road may read in large letters over the door, the name Tagus Shout. Never was there before such a wide-mouthed name for a moneychanger. Co-operators are not alone singular in their names. There was until lately a firm of auctioneers in Kensington trading under the name of Giddy and Giddy.

"Ah," said the dealer in his prompt and unabashed way, turning to his traveller, who was just up in town, "Here's a letter from J. G. Jay may have the Giggles, but there is no giggling about Jay."

The local habits of purchasers make a considerable difference in the cost of managing a store. In some towns purchasers will walk great distances to buy at a store. In another place members will expect four ounces of salt butter to be sent them. In many towns customers will wait in numbers to be served in the order of their arrival. In other towns customers want to be served at once, and will go into any shop rather than wait long at the counter of the store. In these cases, the directors are compelled to provide more counter-men than are really needed, in order that customers may be quickly served. The impetuosity, or impatience, of members puts a large store to expense or loss, it may be of several hundred pounds, which another society in the next town saves. No grocers could be persuaded that the day would come when co-operative societies would raise their prices and increase their profits. Yet this continually occurs; grocers' profit, and the outside public are taxed by co-operative stores. The public, however, can protect themselves by joining the stores. As soon as the dividends on purchases at a store rise higher than the average ordinarily attained, it generally means that higher charges for goods are made by the directors of the store than is charged by shopkeepers in the neighbourhood. As soon as the astute shopkeeper becomes aware of this, he is enabled to raise his prices in proportion. All this is clear gain to him, and he owes this gain to the store.

Any person engaged in promoting stores may obtain information and various publications upon the subject by writing to the General Secretary, Co-operative Union, Long Millgate, Manchester. Among them is one by Mr. Walter Morrison, entitled "Village Co-operative Stores," which contains exactly those practical and familiar suggestions which everybody who belongs to a co-operative store, or desires to promote the establishment of one, would like to have at hand to consult. Besides, Mr. Morrison gives a much-wanted and practical list of the "Description of the Goods," their weight, price, and quantity which a store should begin with; nor does he omit



those higher considerations which make Co-operation worth caring for and worth promoting.

One of the best accounts, next to that of the Bishop of Durham, of the formation and career of a country store was given some time ago by Lord Ducie in the *Times*. It is a complete story of a store, and would make a perfect co-operative tract. This store was commenced on Lord Ducie's property at Tortworth, Gloucestershire, in March, 1867. It was conducted on the "Northern" store plan. The villagers were all in debt to the shops, from which the stores soon freed them. Lord Ducie says, "The moral action of the store thus becomes of great value, encouraging a virtue which precept alone has long failed to promote. The shareholders at the end of the first year were as follows:—Labourers, 25; carpenters and masons, 11; tradesmen, 9; farmers, 6; gardeners, 6; clergy, gentlemen, and domestic servants, and various occupations, 16. Large purchases have been made by non-shareholders, receiving only half profits. The sales were: For the first quarter, £320; second, £349; third, £468; fourth, £511. The dividends to shareholders have been, on purchases: For the first quarter, 3s. 4d.; second, 2s. 9d.; third, 3s. 2d.; fourth, 3s. 6d. For various reasons, the dividends will not in future range higher than 3s. in the pound. The accounts at the end of the year of three labourers who joined at the commencement were:—

			Paid-up Capital.	Dividend on Money Expended.
A	...	...	£1 0 0	£5 0 7
B	...	...	1 14 10	2 10 0
C	...	...	0 19 3	3 17 0

Those men earn 12s. each per week; the difference in the amount of their dividends arises from the different amounts expended by each. A, for instance, has a large family, some of whom add to the family income; his purchases have been large, and the result is a dividend which much more than pays the rent of his house and garden. These men have also received 5 per cent. upon their paid-up capital. The first year of the store ended, the committee ventured upon a drapery branch, having expended £230 in stocking it. They have determined to pay their salesmen 2½ per cent. upon sales in

lieu of a fixed salary, and have secured the whole of their time. They have also decided to pay committeemen 6d. each for every attendance, a humble extravagance which will contrast favourably with the practice of more ambitious institutions."

Of the success of these societies a thousand anecdotes might be related. In these pages the reader will meet with many. One is told by Mr. Alderman Livesey, of Rochdale: "A poor labouring man, owing about £15 to his grocer for provisions, resolved to join a co-operative society. He called upon the grocer and announced his intention to leave the shop. The grocer was of course indignant. The debtor, however, remarked that he was quite prepared to pay his debt by such weekly or monthly instalments as the judge of the county court might direct, and he was willing to do it without the expense and trouble of a legal process. Ultimately the grocer consented to this arrangement. The man kept his promise, the grocer was in due course paid off; profits accumulated in the co-operative society, and he is now the owner of the house he lives in, and is also the owner of another property which he values very highly—a county vote."

The rule of the co-operators to give no credit and take none, saves them the expense of book-keeping, and enables many poor men to escape the slavery of debt themselves. The credit system existed in the Halifax Society until May, 1861, to the extent of two-thirds of the amount of paid-up capital by each member; the confusion, trouble, waste of time, vexation, and moral harm was great. When some Lord Chancellor does what Lord Westbury attempted, abolishes small credits altogether among the people, the poor will become grateful enough and rich enough to put up a statue to his memory in every town.

The normal condition of a workman who is not a co-operator, is to be in debt. Whatever his wages are, he has a book at the grocer's, and he is a fortnight behind the world. If any one benevolently cleared him of debt and gave him a week's money to pay his way with, he would never rest till he was in debt again. The power of saving is an act of intelligence, and Co-operation has imparted it. By its aid 10,000 families in some great towns have acquired this profitable habit. Even if members dealing at a store really paid more for an article than

at a grocer's, that surplus cost, as well as the entire profit made, are paid back to them. It is merely a sort of indirect method for increasing their savings, which otherwise they would not make.

Cobbett used to advise a young man before he married, to observe how his intended wife employed herself in her own family, and unless she was thrifty and a good hand at household duties not to have her. Had Cobbett lived to these days he would have advised young men to give the preference to a girl who belonged to a co-operative store. A young woman who has learned never to go into debt, but to buy with money in hand and save some of the profit at the store, is literally worth her weight in gold. Many a gentleman would save £500 or £1,000 a year had he married a co-operative girl. In many parts of the country now, no sensible young woman will marry a man who does not belong to a store.<sup>1</sup>

At the Leicester Congress, 1877, 20,000 copies of a clever little statement were circulated, which will suffice to explain to the most cursory reader what advantages a good co-operative store may confer upon a town.

"1. It makes it possible for working men to obtain pure food at fair market prices !

"2. It teaches the advantage of cash payments over credit !

"3. It gives men a knowledge of business they could not otherwise obtain !

"4. It enables them to carry on a trade of one hundred and sixty thousand a year !

"5. It makes them joint proprietors of freehold property worth upwards of twenty thousand pounds !

"6. It secures them an annual net profit of sixteen thousand pounds !

"7. It raises many a man's wages two or three shillings per week without a strike !

"8. It alleviates more distress than any other social organisation !" <sup>2</sup>

During the year 1875-6 the Leicester Society divided

<sup>1</sup> See "History of Halifax Society."

<sup>2</sup> The parliamentary return of co-operative societies (1877) obtained by Mr. Cowen, M.P., shows that there were upwards of 12,000 societies then.



amongst its members, as dividend, upwards of £23,000, in addition to several thousands added to the members' share capital.

"Practical" people deride sentiment, but they would not be able to make a penny were it not for "sentimental" people, who have in perilous days bleached with their bones the highway on which the "practical" man walks in selfish safety. People would not save money, much as they need it, did not "sentimental" people make it convenient and pleasant for them.

Some societies are obliged to pass resolutions compelling members to withdraw £10,000 or £20,000 of surplus capital accumulating. It was the original intention of the founders of early stores to start manufactories which might yield them higher dividends than the store paid. In some towns of enterprise this has been done, and building societies, boot and shoe works, spinning mills, cloth factories, have been undertaken. Stores have been discontinued, or remained stationary because the members had no faculty for employing their savings. Some societies have failed, not because they were poor, but because they were too rich, and working men, whose despairing complaint was that they had no capital, have lived to be possessors of more capital than they knew what to do with, and have been compelled to draw it out of the society because they had no capacity for employing it productively. Men who at one time thought it a sin to pay interest for money have lived to regret that they can find no means of obtaining interest for theirs. Many men who complain of capitalists taking interest become the sharpest dividend hunters anywhere to be found, and think of nothing else, and sacrifice education and reasonable enjoyment to the silliness of needless accumulation.

Thieves did not understand their opportunity when stores began. For many years gold might have been captured in quantities at many co-operative stores. Between the time of its accumulation and its being lodged in the bank, quantities might have been stolen with impunity. I have seen a thousand sovereigns lying in a bucket, under a cashier's table—which a clever thief might have carried away. But sharper management, the purchase of good safes, the rapid transit of the cash

to the bank, have taken away these chances. At one store, the cashier used to carry a few hundred pounds to the cottage of the treasurer at night when he thought of it; and the treasurer, the next day—if he did not forget it—would take it to the bank. But the fact that the law had begun to prosecute speculators intimidated the thieves, and the general honesty of co-operators afforded security where carelessness prevailed. I remember a secretary of the Oddfellows who was brought before the magistrates in Manchester for stealing £4,600 from the funds, and he was dismissed, as the law then permitted members of a Provident Society to rob it. Very few robberies of co-operative societies have taken place since the law afforded them protection. In 1875 the Hyde Society was robbed of £1,100. In London, the secretary of a Co-operative Printing Society made away with £2,000, and the magistrates dismissed the charge, for no reason that we could discover, unless he thought co-operators ought to be robbed as a warning to them not to interfere with the business of shopkeepers. But, as a general rule, it is not safe now to rob co-operators, and it commonly proves a very unpleasant thing for any charged with such offence. J. C. Farn, who recorded very valuable experience he had both in the illegal and legal period of Co-operation, gave instances. “I have been instrumental in placing persons in co-operative stores, and they have in bygone days plundered almost with impunity. The following cases which I have reported for newspapers will show the state of the law as it was and is. The deciding magistrates were Mr. Trafford at Salford, and Mr. Walker at Manchester:—Applicant: We want a summons. Mr. Trafford: What for? To compel the trustees of a co-operative society to divide the money they have among the shareholders.—Mr. Trafford: Was the society enrolled? No.—Did you take security from those who held the property on the basis of an individual transaction? No.—I can’t help you, and I would not if I could. You first form an illegal society, you bungle in the management, and then you want me to help you out of the mess; and, as though this was not enough, you let the Statute of Limitations cover everything. No summons can be granted.’ The second case was as follows:—This man, your worship, is charged with embezzling the funds of a co-operative

society.—Mr. Walker : Is it enrolled ? Yes.—Where is a copy of the enrolment ? Here.—Very well. Who is here authorised by the society to prosecute ? I am, your honour, said a person in court.—Go on.—He did go on, and the man was committed. So much for co-operative law in 1853 and 1863."

Stores are in some cases dreary places, and there is often more pleasure in looking into a well-arranged shop window than into a store-window. The taste and ingenuity with which shop-windows are set out certainly give life and interest to the streets. The streets of some cities, which are now brilliant with every art, product, and industry, would look like a prolonged poorhouse, if they were filled with Civil Service and ordinary co-operative stores. The act of purchasing is in itself a pleasure. The dainty association under which a beautiful thing is first seen adds to the delight of possessing it, and the delight is worth paying for. So long as taste and art are unextinguished, the higher class of shop-keeping will endure. The lower class of shops, of cleanliness, simplicity, and articles of honest make, have always been frequented with pleasure and always will. The purchaser of prepared food feels under a personal obligation to the vendor who sells him what is savoury and cleanly made, and what he can eat without misgiving. Mere vulgar shopkeeping, which ministers only to coarseness and cheapness, which lowers the taste of every purchaser, or prevents him acquiring any, and furnishes a means of selling articles which ought never to be made, is but a demoralising business. Such shops were well superseded by real co-operative stores. Co-operative stores improve taste so far as honesty and quality go, but its humble members cannot be all expected to have simple and true taste, which might exist among the poor in degree as well as among the rich. It is seen in the jewels of an Italian peasant, in the dress of a French girl, and in the homes and handicrafts of working people of many nations. Lectures upon the art of choosing products, why they should be selected in preference to others, in what state consumed, or worn, will no doubt be one day fully associated with co-operative stores.

The Corn Society's New Mill, Weir Street, Rochdale,



according to the engraving which represents it, which I published at the Fleet Street House, twenty or more years ago, is the most melancholy mill that ever made a dividend. Dark, thick, murky clouds surround it, and the sky-line is as grim as the ridges of a coffin. The white glass of the plain front meets the eye like the ghost of a disembodied mill. A dreary waggon, carrying bags of corn, guided by drivers that look like mutes, is making its way through a cold Siberian defile. The builder might have made it pleasant to the eye, with as little expense as he made it ugly. But in those days nobody thought of comeliness, seemliness, or pleasantness in structures, in which men would work all their lives. The really pleasant part about the corn mill was in the minds of the gallant co-operators who set it going, and kept it going. But grimness is gradually changing for the better. Some of the Oldham mills put up under co-operative inspiration are places of some taste, and in some cases of architectural beauty, with towers making a cheerful sky-line without, and spacious windows making the workrooms lightsome within. The old bare-bones view of economy is dying out. It has come to be perceived that it is ugliness which is dear, and beauty which is cheap.

A few years ago there appeared in *Reynolds' Newspaper* a series of letters signed "Unitas," advising the formation of a "National Industrial Provident Society," of which, when the prospectuses appeared, William Watkins was named as the secretary. The object appeared to be to establish co-operative stores, to retain the profits due to the members, and convert them into paid-up premiums in self-devised insurance societies, guaranteeing endowments, superannuation allowances, and other benefits. The plan was ingenious and attractive, and no doubt might be worked as a new feature of co-operation, which would spread the system in many quarters. The idea of persons being able to provide payments in sickness, or loss of employment; and, if the fund to their credit was not exhausted in this way, to secure a sum at death, or a fixed income at a certain age, by simply buying their provisions at a certain store, is both feasible and alluring. This scheme made great progress in Wales. I felt bound to oppose it, but with considerable regret. Its frustration was ascribed to me, and I was

threatened with an action for libel on the part of the proprietor of the paper in which the scheme originated. The plan required to be conducted by persons of known character and substance of the nature of security, and business capacity. If it succeeded to any extent, the profits of the members would be in possession of a comparatively unknown committee of men living in the metropolis. In their hands also would be vested the property of all these stores. The provisioning of these stores from a central agency would be entirely under their control, and the rates of charges, the quality of provisions, and the funds would be practically unchecked by the subscribers. At the same time there is no doubt that in the hands of known, responsible, and able men of commercial resource and business organisation, a comprehensive scheme of this kind of Co-operative Insurance would have great popularity, great success, and do a great amount of good, and make Co-operation a matter of household interest in a way not yet thought of by the great body of co-operators.

Since Co-operation means that everybody concerned has an interest in doing what he ought to do, the directors of the store, the secretary, the manager of it, all persons engaged in serving it, should have an interest in performing their duties, as well as they were able. It is not good for business when no one has a permanent motive for service and civility. If few persons come to a counter, the better it is for the shopman, who has no interest in them. He will repel or neglect all he can. A shopman having an intelligent interest in the purchasers, and friendly to them, makes custom at the store a personal pleasure as well as profit. For all to be respectful and pleasant to each other is no mean part of the art of association which co-operators have to cultivate. Personal courtesy, which is never neglectful, never inconsiderate, diffuses more pleasure through the life of a town than the splendour of wealth, or the glory of pageants. They are seen but for an hour, while the civilities and kindnesses of daily intercourse fill up the larger life, and convert its monotony into gladness.

The earlier stores were a sort of Board School of co-operators. Co-operative education began there ; and as the majority of all co-operators were themselves or their families in daily inter-

course with the store, that was the place where useful information was diffused, and the greatest number of good impressions given. That is where co-operative literature can be sold, where news of all that concerns members can be posted up, that is where the stranger looks in to see what is going on. Everything should be clean there, and the brass work bright, and every article that can be shown, without deterioration, displayed with taste. The pleasure of seeing and selecting is half the pleasure of buying. Knowledge of the nature and varieties of pure provisions, taste in colours, patterns and texture of garments is a part of education in man or woman, and shows the quality of their individual character. Wise shopmen, therefore, who understand what business service means, and who have interest in its success, are as important agents in their places as directors or managers. Servers should be carefully chosen, treated well, and have a clear interest in the success and popularity of the store. It is in their power to make the store repellent or popular. Those who hesitate to give them good wages and a dividend upon them, the same as that accruing to purchasers, do not understand what may be got out of good servants. Those who render service in Co-operation have influence. The server is in a position of equality. I purposely write Server instead of Servant, because servant is understood to imply meniality; while a server is one who obliges.

Societies do not always consider sufficiently the qualities of those whom they appoint directors. They often elect those who talk well instead of those who think well. Sometimes a person coarse-minded, harsh and abrupt, uncereemonious in dealing with officers of the store under him, will harden them into indifference to the welfare of the store, and be unpleasant to purchasers. A member of fluency and ambition will be very flattering in quarterly meetings, and win repute for most agreeable qualities until he gets an appointment, who has himself no sense of personal courtesy, and will be very offensive to others over whom he has power. Courtesy, where a man has his own way, and to all who can help him to it, may co-exist in the same person who is at the same time insolent to any who have independence of spirit, and who may withstand him. There never was a tyrant deservedly execrated by a



nation who had not a crowd of followers ready to testify to his humanity and amiability. Tennyson in his drama, warns Harold how he should comport himself towards the Duke of Normandy, in whose power he is, and who is only gracious to those who lend themselves to his ends.

"Obey him, speak him fair,  
For he is only debonair to those  
That follow where he leads, but stark as death  
To those that cross him." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Harold," by Alfred Tennyson.

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